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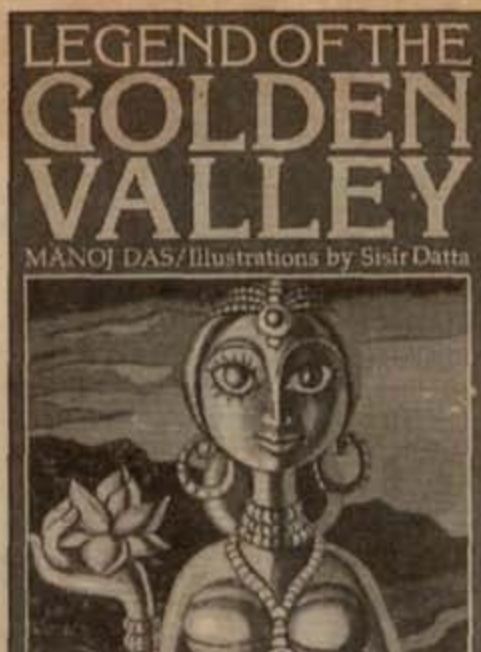


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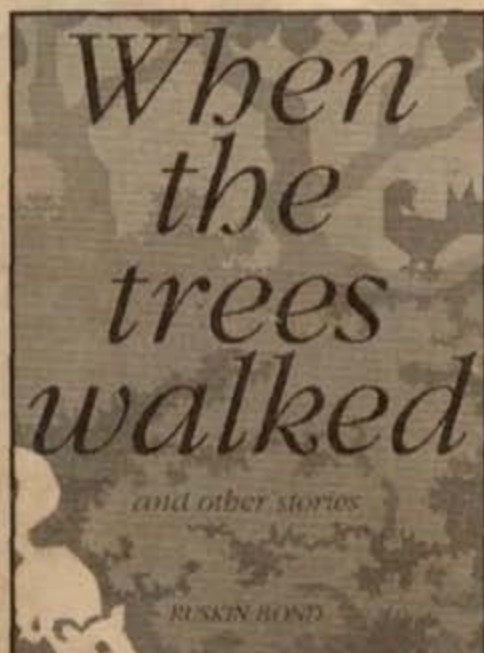


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CHANDAMAMA

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MAHABHARATA : On the conclusion of their long exile, the Pandavas reveal their identity, much to the elation of their friends. They assemble at King Virata's palace to discuss the future course of action. They talk of persuading Duryodhana to part with the lands to which the Pandavas have a rightful claim, but everybody is almost certain that the Kaurava prince will not that easily agree to the proposition and, if so, a war will be inevitable. King Drupada suggests that an emissary be sent to Duryodhana. The mission does not succeed. The Kauravas and the Pandavas make preparations for war and seek help from allies. Arjuna and Duryodhana reach Dwaraka almost at the same time. Krishna offers to the rival sides the choice of the entire Yadava army or himself alone. What will Arjuna choose ? And what will be Duryodhana's preference ?

GREAT KINGS OF INDIA : From kings in Indian mythology to those of historic times.

THE THREE BABIES : There is an air of expectancy in the Kingdom of Veerapuri. The people eagerly await the news of the birth of a daughter or son for the king. The wives of the Chief Minister and the Commander of the army, too, are expecting babies. An astrologer predicts fluctuating fortunes for the kingdom.

PLUS "Coastal Journeys", "Golden Hour", and Chandamama Supplement in its new incarnation.





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Beyond awards and prizes

A group of gaily dressed and beaming children rode on elephants in the vanguard of the cultural pageant at the Republic Day parade on January 26. They were the children who won Bravery Awards instituted by the Indian Council for Child Welfare in 1996. The awards were distributed to them a couple of days earlier by the Prime Minister. Consisting of a cash prize and a certificate, the awards were accompanied by gifts of books and toys.

The Bravery Awards have been in existence for nearly twenty years. A valid question has been raised in certain responsible quarters, whether the authorities should not and could not contemplate a more lasting reward?

A cash prize is easily spent; more often than not the child might not even get the full benefit of the prize. And how long will books and toys and games remain with the recipient unless, of course, he or she is careful and has the facilities to keep them safe or preserve (books, for instance) them?

Invariably, these children are between the ages of five and fifteen, and a majority of them hail from families not so affluent. If so, how about helping them pursue their studies in higher classes in school and college with some financial assistance? Their continuance in the education sector for a longer number of years will make them role models for their mates in schools and colleges.

This is just ONE way the nation can remember these young girls and boys who had gone to save the lives of others unmindful of the risk involved to their own life.

A WINDOW ON THE WORLD

"Coming together of old friends"

Whenver countries come together for 'building bridges and promoting cooperation' between themselves, it augurs well for people all over the world, directly or indirectly. Several countries of the world have already formed 'trade blocs' to expand trade and commerce. The latest among them is what has been called the Indian Ocean Rim Association, which has as its members fourteen nations lying around the Indian Ocean. They are, from one end to the other, South Africa, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Tanzania, Kenya, Yemen, Oman, India, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, and Australia.

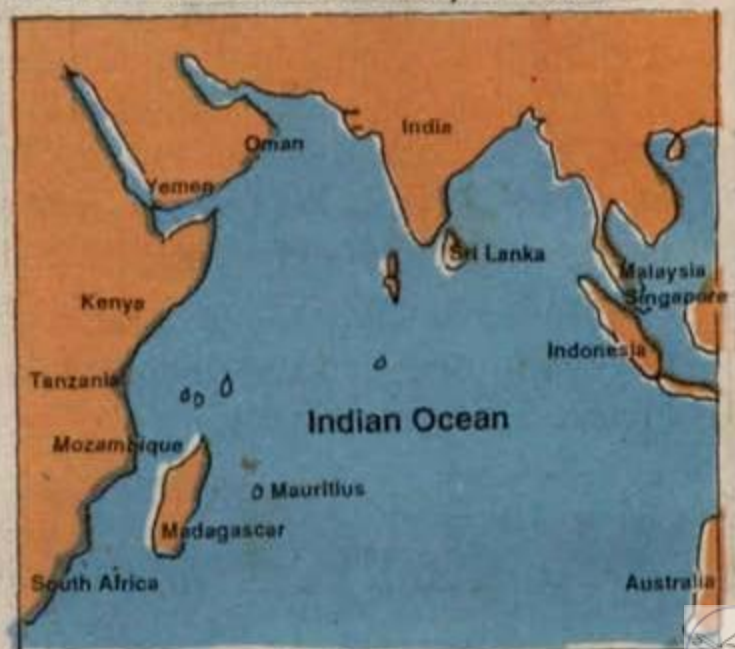
It was Mr. Pik Botha, Foreign Minister of South Africa who, during his visit to India four years ago, mooted the idea of cooperation among countries touching the waters of the Indian Ocean. In 1995, Mauritius took the initiative and paved the way for forming a core group consisting of seven members—Australia, India, Kenya, Mauritius, Oman, Singapore, and South Africa. Subsequently, the other seven, too, joined.

The first meeting of the Foreign and Trade Ministers of these fourteen nations took place in Port Louis, capital of Mauritius, on March 5, when the Charter of the Association was adopted. It states the objectives as 'building understanding between the members and expanding mutually beneficial cooperation'. The focus will be on economic cooperation

'to provide maximum opportunities, share interest, and reap mutual benefits'.

The objectives are expected to be achieved through ten projects, like introduction of greater trade facilities, exchange of scientific and technological expertise, development of human resources, and expansion of tourism. The meeting decided that the secretariat of the Association will function from Mauritius, and a working group will be formed to consider application for membership from other countries.

Predictably, some countries are already in the queue for membership in the Association, taking in view the advantages of getting into this formidable group of trading partners. At the Port Louis meeting, India expressed its reservation about enlarging the membership and wished that the number of members be limited so as to make the organisation more effective. Mr. I.K. Gujral, India's Foreign Minister, among others, recalled the maritime trade routes that linked the seafaring nations around the Indian Ocean in the historic times. After the advent of the colonial powers, those trade links got disrupted. What has happened now is a "coming together of old friends and trade partners".



A PROMISE KEPT



Lakshman was a diamond merchant. He had four children – three boys and a girl. He would often go out of the country to sell diamonds or to take orders. Once he went on a long voyage by ship and was away for many days when the family suffered a tragedy. The mother passed away.

On his return, Lakshman began worrying. How would he look after the children alone? One day, he called his accountant and said, "Look here, I'm going to attend the Kumbh Mela. You take care of the boys; I shall take Lakshmi along with me. We shall return after the Mela concludes." The next day father and daughter left for the Kumbh Mela.

After ten days, the merchant came back, alone. He looked grief-stricken. The moment people asked him about

Lakshmi, he began weeping. "She was swept away by the river when she was taking a bath!" They tried to console him, but he remained gloomy and moody. He seemed to have lost interest in his business.

A few days went by. He called his accountant once again. "Let me go abroad and try to get some business. The boys are growing. Keep an eye on them. I hope they won't give you any botheration."

It was after two years that he came back. He was happy to see that things had gone smooth in his absence. He spent just a fortnight before he started once again. He returned after three years, spent a fortnight with his sons and went away once again. Fifteen years passed thus.

The next time he came back, he





called his sons to his side. "After the demise of your mother and departure of your sister, I haven't been able to concentrate in my business. I'm also getting old. I don't know how long I'll remain alive. Anyway, I'm going away for one last time with the hope of making some money. On the loft in my bedroom, you'll find a wooden box. That's the only treasure I'm leaving for all three of you. You may share it between yourselves. I've a friend, Balaratnam, in Vajrapuri. His only daughter is Ratnavali. I had once promised him that I would help him conduct her wedding. You will carry out my promise, won't you?"

The three boys agreed to fulfil their father's promise. Lakshman felt

greatly relieved. In the next two days he was off. Unfortunately, his ship met with an accident; he and several others were drowned in mid-sea. Some of the ship's hands, however, managed to save themselves. They went back and told Lakshman's sons of the tragedy. Now there was no point in waiting for his return.

So, they brought down the wooden box from the loft in his bedroom. It was quite heavy. The boys thought it was full of money. After all, their father had been in diamond business for several years. They eagerly unlocked the box and opened it. There was no money, nor diamonds, not even small coins. There was only a simple note in his handwriting. It read: "Balaratnam's daughter Ratnavali's wedding should be conducted."

The boys were thoroughly disappointed. They were angry with their father. They lay down on their mats and slept. At dead of night, the eldest boy got up and left the place quietly. In the morning, the younger boys missed the elder brother. They waited the whole day; he did not come back. The youngest one remarked: "He seems to have cleverly dumped the whole responsibility on us, that's why he has disappeared very stealthily. Let's fulfil our father's wish, even if we have to sell this house. After all, we have arms and legs, and we'll be able to eke out a living." The older brother agreed with every word of the

younger one.

Within a few days, they sold the house and the property surrounding the house. The two brothers then proceeded to Vajrapuri.

On the way, they saw a crowd beneath a huge tree. People were talking, some arguing angrily and some others trying to pacify them. The brothers made enquiries and were told that the village elders were trying to solve a family quarrel. It appeared that a rich man had died suddenly, leaving a lot of property. He had two sons and a daughter. The sons wanted to grab the whole property and so had forced their widowed mother and sister to leave home. They had no other place to go and had, therefore, approached the village elders with a complaint. The headman had convened a meeting of the villagers to find a solution to the problem. The elders announced their decision: The two sons should take back their mother and sister and give them food, clothes, and protection and should also arrange for the marriage of their sister. The people cheered them for their very just decision.

The two brothers decided to break their journey and stay overnight in the village. They stayed in a choultry. When the younger brother woke up in the morning, he found the elder one missing, along with the money they were taking to Vajrapuri. The young man was dazed for a long time. He did



not know what to do. Should he go back and take up some work? Or should he proceed to Vajrapuri and inform Balaratnam of all that had happened? He decided on the second alternative, in the hope that his father's friend would not disbelieve his story and would at the same time feel sorry for the predicament he was in.

He reached Vajrapuri and searched for Balaratnam's house. He stood before what looked like a palatial residence. His father's friend was certainly not a poor man who would need any financial help to conduct his daughter's wedding. Or had he come to the wrong house? He took courage and knocked on the door. The door was opened by a gentleman about

fifty years old. "Who are you? Where are you from? Whom do you want to meet?" the gentleman asked in a commanding tone.

"I've come to meet my father's friend—someone called Balaratnam," replied the young man.

"I'm Balaratnam," said the gentleman. "What do you want? And who's your father?"

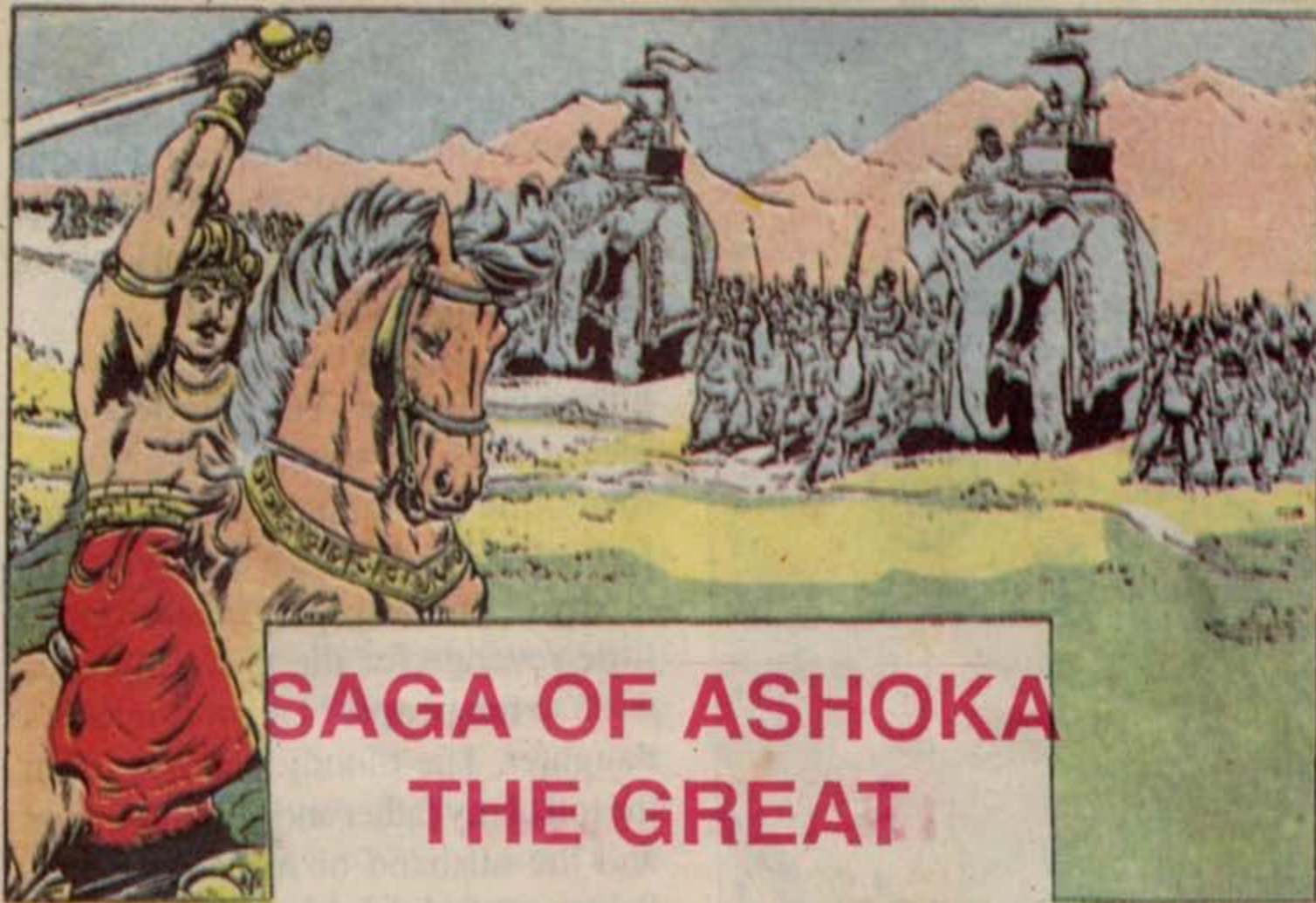
"Sir, my father was a diamond merchant, Lakshman," said the youngster. "I hope you remember him. Perhaps you don't know that his ship met with an accident and he was one of those who lost their lives. He had told us—his three sons — of his promise, to conduct his friend Balaratnam's daughter's wedding. I've come here to fulfil that promise." He then told the gentleman all that had happened after their father's tragic end. He concluded by saying, "Sir, I've come here empty-handed, but let me assure you that I shall work hard, earn enough money, and perform your daughter's

wedding just as my father had wished."

The gentleman laughed. "Young man, it was a strategy adopted by your father to find out who among you three will be sincere in fulfilling his promise," he said. "Now we have seen who's selfish, who's sincere. In fact, he had entrusted with me two lakh rupees to be given to whichever of his sons came here. You're lucky and the entire money will now go to you, because you've proved that you care more for keeping a word than grabbing money. For your information, Ratnavali is not my daughter. I had adopted her ever since she was entrusted to me by your father. She is your own sister Lakshmi!" He then called out to the girl and she came and greeted her brother. Her joy knew no bounds. No less was the joy felt by her brother at their reunion.

Soon, a suitable match was found for Lakshmi and her wedding was conducted in a grand style.





SAGA OF ASHOKA THE GREAT

The story so far: *The Kalinga war is almost over. Ashoka is elated over his victory. However, he has his own doubts, when the young woman who had aimed a fatal arrow at Yasa, claims that Kalinga has not yet been conquered. If that be the case, Ashoka wonders, has the whole expedition been a meaningless exercise? A slow transformation takes place in the mind of Ashoka. What does he decide about Kalinga?*

What would have happened if the young woman had taken aim at him, instead of at Yasa? wondered King Ashoka—seated alone in a room inside the fort of Toshali. The fort had been thoroughly cleared of all the dead bodies. There had been a heavy shower washing away the thick blood drying up all over the floors, terraces, and courtyards.

Even though Ashoka had not been killed, he felt half dead. Memory of Yasa haunted him. Yasa had become a part of himself, coming to his rescue at the most crucial moments. What is

the meaning of success in life, what is the meaning of life itself, if everything should come to nought so abruptly? Yasa was to rule Kalinga as his representative. But his body went up in flames on the banks of the river Daya, even before the fire that still burnt here and there over this devastated land had subsided.

The chief general of the army entered the room. Ashoka cast a vacant look at him and asked, “Have you despatched a messenger to Ujjain?”

“Yes, my lord, giving the good tiding of Your Majesty’s victory and





also informing Queen Vidisha Devi of the sad demise of Yasa.”

“Our so-called victory would mean no joy to her. But Yasa's death would cause her great sorrow. He was like a true brother to her and her guardian, too,” said Ashoka.

“Think of the thousands of men and women who lost their brothers, sons, husbands, and guardians in the futile violence you let loose on this peace-loving country!” shrieked out a woman from the passage.

“Shut up, you mad girl!” the general looked behind and shouted.

The young lady who had killed Yasa came in, hands chained.

“I dragged her along to receive your orders for her!” the general

informed Ashoka.

But neither Ashoka nor the girl seemed to pay any attention to the general's words. Ashoka kept looking at the girl with amazement.

“Even if I don't shut up, you know how to silence me. You may do as you please, but try to think clearly. Who is mad? One who ruins a million homes for nothing better than satisfying his vanity or one who tries to take only a little revenge for the grave injustice done to her people? I am a chieftain's daughter. The bloody war has taken the toll of my father and all my brothers and the husband of my elder sister. Both my mother and sister, unable to bear their grief, killed themselves. This is only an account of *my* personal sorrow. But did you ever give a thought to what you have done to this beautiful and prosperous land? Practically all the able-bodied men of this land are killed or taken prisoner. As a result, its legendary maritime activities—its voyages to faraway lands—would come to an end. Its lush green paddy-fields used to smile at the sky. Now, with nobody to look after them, they would lie fallow. There will be famine. Those who have survived the war, mostly children, women, and the aged, would die of starvation. For what? So that *your* own men would sing *your* glory as a conqueror; the other kings and their people would look at you with fear, suspicion, and hatred. The people of Kalinga would

never stop cursing you..."

"Stop! Will you?" shouted the general, his hand clutching his sword.

"Please, my brave general. Let her go on," said Ashoka, to the general's great surprise.

"Well, tomorrow or the day after, you too would go the way your victims have gone. I have no knowledge about the other world. Supposing the ghosts of all those you killed are there—waiting for you—how would your spirit fare, O King? What will you do if they were to pounce on you? You can't carry your general or your bodyguards to protect you there! How much I wish that my father and my brothers, whom your soldiers killed treacherously, not in face to face fight, but from behind while they were sharpening their weapons, were the first ones to receive you!" The girl suddenly burst into a wild laughter.

"My lord, kindly permit me to put an end to her madness," said the general.

But Ashoka did not answer him. He took a step towards the girl in chains. "What's your name?" he asked.

"Karuvaki."

"Karuvaki, what would you do if you were in my place?" asked Ashoka.

"Forthwith I'll regret my folly, my vainglorious ambition, my beastly thirst for blood. I'll renounce arms and denounce violence as unworthy of true human beings," replied Karuvaki, in a voice strong with the



courage of conviction.

Before Ashoka had reacted to her statement, his chief bodyguard appeared before him. "My lord, a messenger from Ujjain!"

"Usher him in."

The bodyguard was back in a minute, with the messenger, an officer known to Ashoka. "You've come in good time, Srikar, when the war is over. At first tell me how is the queen, Vidisha Devi? And our children?" Ashoka looked on with expectation.

"Pardon me, my lord, I wish I had never been required to meet you with such a bad news!" said Srikar, his head hung.

"Well?..." Ashoka looked on, his face darkened in anticipation of some



ominous tiding.

"The queen is no more!"

"What do you say? How could that have happened?"

"My lord, some merchants from Ujjain, who were here and who witnessed the bloody war the first day, fled to Ujjain and narrated the horrors to the people there. The queen summoned them and received their report. She said she must atone for the cruelty of her husband. She entered a shrine and sat there, motionless in meditation, for three days and three nights, without food, drink, and sleep and then collapsed."

Silence prevailed around Ashoka for a long time. Then, suddenly, Karuvaki giggled.

"Aren't you ashamed of your conduct? Is this the time to laugh?" demanded the general.

"General, Sir, so far as I'm concerned, laughter and weeping have lost their meaning. I can laugh all the time or weep," said Karuvaki.

"My lord, I'd better take this prisoner out," said the general.

"You need not. She can go out herself, of her free will. Set her free, at once!" ordered Ashoka.

"Set her—the killer of Yasa—free, my lord?"

"Yes, Yasa himself had pardoned her, because she had aimed her arrow at him instead of at me. We must respect Yasa's last will," said Ashoka.

"My lord!" said Karuvaki while the general untied her, "Yasa was noble, as was evident from his dying words. But I had to kill either him or you in order to avenge the destruction of my innocent family and my kinsmen and my land. As I raised my bow, my intuition told me that you should be spared. Perhaps Providence will make you do something good."

"Do you believe that a man like me, Ashoka the terrible, Chandashoka as I am described by the people of Kalinga, can do something good?" asked Ashoka.

"Indeed, O King, every person has a brighter side to his character. Wasn't Yasa responsible for several massacres? Yet, his nobility came out just when he breathed his last. Who

can say if Ashoka the terrible, Chandashoka, would not turn into Ashoka the pious, Dharmashoka?"



Ashoka stationed his general at Toshali after setting free all the prisoners and hastened to Ujjain. He wept and prayed over the now cold funeral pyre of Vidisha Devi, as his son Mahendra and daughter Samghamitra stood by his side, in silence.

"I have betrayed your mother's trust in me, my children!" he said with deep anguish.

"You can atone for it and for everything else. Tathagata Buddha's grace would be with you!"

The assurance came from the old Upagupta, Vidisha Devi's guru, who was seen approaching Ashoka.

The course of history began to change. Ashoka embraced Buddhism. He forbade war and prohibited violence in any form. He appointed guardians of Dharma throughout his empire to see that peace and justice

prevailed. On a rock at Mount Dhauli, overlooking the ruined fort of Toshali, he inscribed his regret over his deed, his message of peace and the truth he had realised – that no true conquest can be done by the sword. It can be done only by an appeal to people's hearts.

Similar messages were inscribed in different parts of his empire. He sent learned emissaries of Buddhism not only to the neighbouring kingdoms, but also to distant countries like Syria and Egypt. Mahendra and Samghamitra sailed to Lanka and converted the king of the island and his subjects to Buddhism.

Ashoka, according to many, was the greatest monarch that ever lived, not for his conquest and power, but for his compassion and faith. He was the first great king in history of the world who wished the whole mankind to grow enlightened, and devoted all his time and resources to that end.

(Concluded)



Trekking is travel, but travel is not...

★ *Reader Amol Patil, of Bodwad, Bhusawal, wants to know the difference between travel, journey, and trek.*

Travel and journey mean almost the same, according to the dictionary. But they can be used differently, too. One can go on a travel to the U.S.A., which may involve a journey from Bombay to London, London to New York, and New York to Los Angeles. One can travel within India, and undertake journeys by air, rail or road. Notice the subtle differences between the two words, which can be used effectively to suit specific expressions. One goes to climb Mount Everest, but before one starts actual climbing, one has to trek from one camp to another — a long walk from one point to another. People in the U.S.A. often go trekking during holidays, but they will not be walking, they will travel by their improvised home on wheels! But that also is trekking.

★ *Reader Santosh Kumar Bahali, of Gelpur, Bhadrak, is perplexed: In English grammar, it is written "two and two make four", but it is also written "two and two is four". Why is it that the plural form of the verb is used in one instance, whereas it is the singular form in the other?*

Both are correct. The second sentence has to be read as: "The total of two and two is four", where the words 'the total of' are understood, and the singular predicate goes with the singular noun 'total'.

★ *What does the idiom "to count one's chickens before they are hatched" mean? asks Basanti Samal of Dhenkanal.*

The idiom means—to rely on a benefit that is uncertain. How is one certain how many chicks will come out of the eggs or whether there will be a chicken at all when the egg is hatched? One may actually count the number of eggs in the coop, but to start counting the chickens before the eggs are hatched will be foolish.

★ *What is meant by "to hit a bad patch" ? asks Jyoti Ranjan Biswal, of Talcher.*

To hit or strike a bad patch simply means to have a difficult time, or meet unfavourable conditions, like, "Last year he was the best batsman in the university team, but he has struck a bad patch in the last few months."

★ *Reader Aparajitha Besan, of Godbhaya, Orissa, has taken an expression from a newspaper - death pact - and wants to know its meaning.*

A pact is always between two or more persons, and when they come to an agreement to end their lives, it is then called a 'death pact'.

The smell and the shadow



A long long time ago, a poor man was passing through a village. He felt very hungry and tired. So he sat under a tree, untied the bundle hanging from his shoulder, and began to relish his simple and coarse diet.

Not far from the tree, under which the poor traveller sat, stood the only proud foodstall of the hamlet. Its plump round owner was frying delicious fish and potato chips. In fact, she was known to be not only mean but also a great bully.

Now, while the weary man ate his meal, she intently eyed him. Soon he finished it with a contented smile and,

stroking his belly, prepared himself for a nap. The big owner of the stall marched with a flourish to where the poor man lay under the cool shade of the tree.

"Hey, you! How dare you sleep blissfully without having first cleared my bill? Quick, give me two silver pieces," she demanded with a chuckle.

"But, why should I pay you two silver pieces, my good lady?" asked the surprised traveller, as he sat up.

"Why? One silver for the fish, and the other for the chips!" she replied plainly.

"I haven't even been anywhere near your shop, let alone eat your fish



and chips!" protested the poor traveller, quite bewildered.

"Mister! Look here, don't try to be very smart with me. Okay?" cautioned the fat woman, shaking her large fists. "It's very plain, as clear as the light of day! Everybody can see and will admit that you, with your long nose, have been relishing your food along with the smell of my fried fish and chips!"

"What?"

"Yes, my dear friend, your meal consisting of only unpalatable coarse rice and salt could never have been delicious without the flavour from my frying pans!" explained the stall-owner with a loud laugh.

Soon their argument drew a crowd. The simple folks were all indeed sympathetic towards the poor man, but they could not dismiss the

woman's claim! Besides, some of them had reasons to keep the bully in good humour.

"It's summertime and the wind blows from the south!" said one such villager.

"Then it must have surely carried the delicious flavour from the frying pans to the long and sensitive nose of the traveller!" remarked the second.

"It's pure common sense!" exclaimed a third.

But the plump woman and the long-nosed traveller were both adamant and none showed any sign of accepting defeat.

It so happened that the judge over the area was passing through the village. Some people ran and reported the dispute to him.

"O respectful judge! This man, with a nose long and sensitive has



enjoyed his most coarse and unpalatable meal with the mouth-watering flavour of my fried fish and chips! Now the cheat refuses to pay me for it!" emphatically explained the lady, even though she was not happy at having to face the judge, known as a learned man.

"I see! I see!" exclaimed the wise man. Turning to the poor man he asked, "Now, what do you have to say? Mind you, speak the truth!"

"Your Honour! I don't deny that the south wind did carry the sweet flavour of the fish and chips being fried while I was eating," replied the traveller truthfully.

"Then, what's the price of a plate of fish and chips?" asked the judge, looking at the woman.

"God bless you, O great judge! It's only two silver pieces! Hurrah! I've won!" she exclaimed.

"Wait!" put in the learned man scratching his bald pate. "Let both the woman and the traveller stand in the

open under the sun."

"Then?" asked the eager onlookers.

"Then the traveller should hold out two silver pieces against the sunlight."

"Very well, only after that should he place them on my palms, of course!" added the plump woman, performing some rhythmic steps.

"No! Not in the least! You, owner of the stall, will only pick up the shadow cast by the two silver coins," interrupted the judge with a smile.

"But how can that be?" vehemently protested the lady.

"Yes, it has to be! For if the price of a plate of fried fish and chips is two silver pieces, the price of the smell of a plate of fish and chips must surely be the shadow of the two silver pieces!" the wise man passed his judgement, his brilliance shining on his bald pate in the mellow sunlight.

The crowd most enthusiastically applauded the judgement.

— Retold by Anup Kishore Das





ROCK GARDEN

The Kew Gardens in London are famed for rare plants New York's Central Park in Manhattan is the largest garden in the world covering 740 acres of lawn and lake. The Rock Garden in Chandigarh is distinctively different. It is the home of 20,000 shapes and figures fashioned from natural rock formations and some from unwanted junk. The garden has a mystic charm with sudden twists and turns, with bridges that lead nowhere. The Rock Garden is peopled by strange beings like bears and horses and studded with clinker terracotta monkeys, and peacocks made of broken glass bangles. There are vast stretches of open land filled with human figures, school children in mosaic, and young men marching. The landscaping of the Rock Garden is the work of a genius - Nekchand.



He has been honoured with a *Padmashri*, and a Presidential Award. In 1985 he was invited to create a fantasy garden in the children's museum in New Delhi. The Rock Garden in Chandigarh is an irresistible draw for visitors from other parts of India and abroad.

Sukadeva

Suka was the son of the great sage Vyasadeva, the compiler of the Vedas and the poet of the epic *Mahabharata*.

Suka was taught by no less a person than Brihaspati, the guru of the gods. The boy lived with him for some years and mastered several subjects and returned to his father.

"Father, I somehow feel that my education is not complete. I have learnt what the scriptures taught me; I can live as an ascetic, devoting my time to meditation, aloof from society. But is that the most ideal way to lead one's life? Something tells me that it is not," Suka one day told his father, Vyasa.

"Why don't you get married and become an ideal householder?" suggested Vyasa.

"But to lead an ordinary life in society, like a million others, is out of the question for me. I can never feel satisfied with that," answered the young Sukadeva.

Vyasadeva sat silent for a moment. Then he said, "I suggest that you proceed to Mithila and meet King Janaka."

Suka proceeded to Mithila on foot and met the king. At first he could not understand why his father should have

sent him to a king who lived in luxury, surrounded by courtiers and busy with the normal functions of a king. But as he observed the king, and discussed issues with him, he realised that the king was an exceptional man. Even though he lived in luxury, he was never influenced by it. Even though he performed all his worldly duties, he was never attached to any. In fact, he was constantly in a pure consciousness, dedicating all his works to the Divine.

Suka returned to his father, thoroughly satisfied.



(With this our series on sages ends. We begin a new series on the great kings of India from the next issue. —Editor)

D O YOU KNOW?

SALMON FISH

Salmon are born in large holes in fresh water streams. They live in these streams. They live in these streams. They live in these streams for about 2 years, and they go downstream to the sea. After few years, when they have to reproduce they go back where they were born and lay their eggs.



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RAINBOW



Unique Bird Park

The 'Jurong Bird Park' in Singapore has 6,000 species of feathered friends. It was built at the cost of eight million Singapore dollars. The park has 160 penguins of five species and 8,000 birds of 6,000 different species. Lakes and Paddocks are built for the display of the water birds and many exotic plants are also grown. The Jurong Park has a unique kind of show called 'All star bird show' which features pigeons, hornbills and pelicans.

THE RIGHT ANSWER

The Zamindar of Sandur was looking for someone who would manage his household affairs, keep accounts, and supervise the servants. His dewan arranged for announcements to be made from public places. The drummers went out to all nooks and corners, with the result a whole lot of applicants reached the Zamindar's residence on the stipulated date and time. He decided to put them to a test. He had only one question to ask them: "Imagine that you have fallen into a pit ten feet long, ten feet wide, and ten feet deep. What will you do?" Almost all of them had the same answer "I'll shout for help!"

Almost all, except one. He asked a counter question: Is there a ladder in the pit?" "No," replied the Zamindar.

The applicant persisted. "Does the fall take place during the day or night?" "That question is not necessary for the correct answer," said the Zamindar.

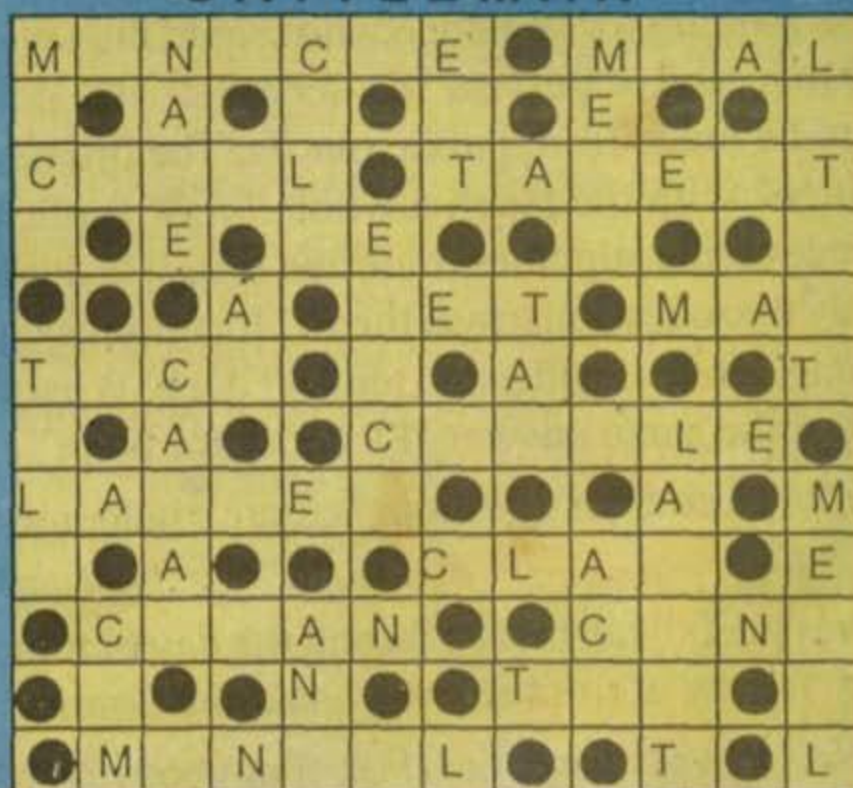
The man did not give up. "No, it's very essential. For, if anybody were to fall during the day, he'll be a blind person. If not, he would certainly notice such a huge pit in front of him. I'm not blind, and I won't fall into the pit."

The Zamindar was quite satisfied with the applicant. He appointed him straight away.



A MERICAN PUZZLE - P.S. Kumar

Find 31 words from the single word
'CATTLEMAN'



Clues

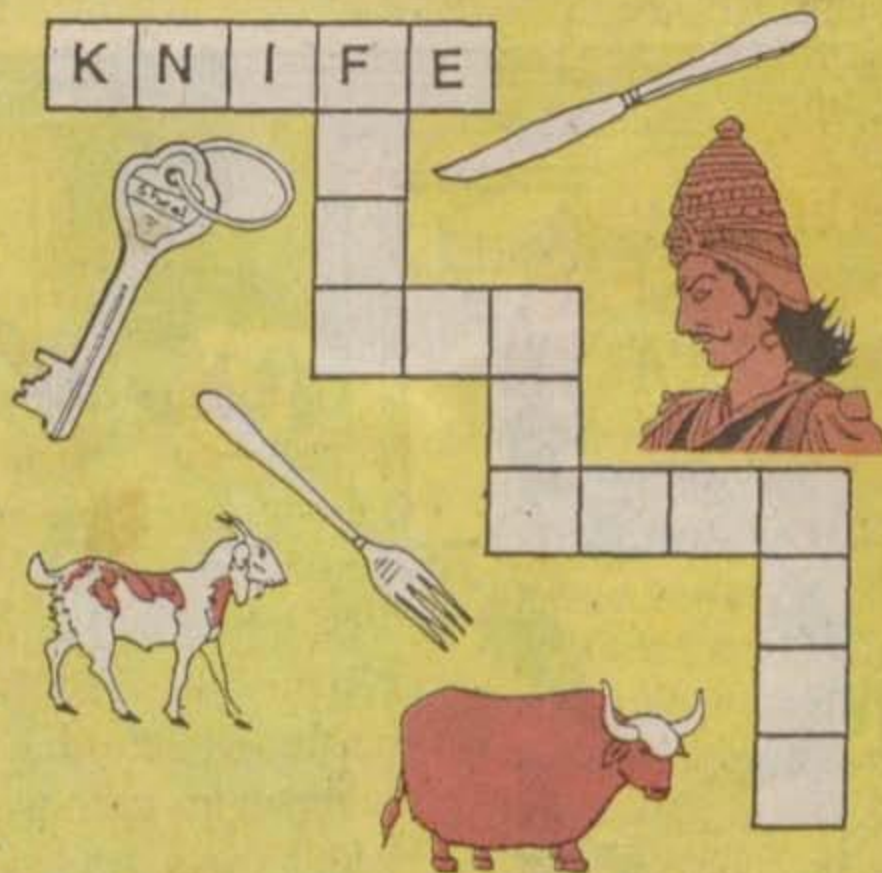
2 letter words -	2
3 letter words -	8
4 letter words -	9
5 letter words -	5
6 letter words -	6
7 letter words -	1
Total words -	31

Solution to last month's puzzle



CROSS WORD

-Bhaskar



Using the picture clues make connecting words

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New Tales of King Vikram
and the Vampire

POWER Vs. DUTY

Dark was the night and weird the atmosphere. It rained from time to time. Gusts of wind shook the trees. Between thunderclaps and the moaning of jackals could be heard the eerie laughter of spirits. Flashes of lightning revealed fearsome faces.

But King Vikram did not swerve a bit. He climbed the ancient tree and brought the corpse down. However, as soon as he began crossing the desolate cremation ground with the corpse lying on his shoulder, the vampire that possessed the corpse spoke: "O King, normally you should be enjoying a good sleep at this hour of the night. Instead of doing that, what makes you go through this strange rite? I'm reminded of the wizards and sorcerors who are employed by kings and emperors. Some of them are capable of performing wonderful acts, though others fail in their attempts. Listen to the story of Madhavsén. You'll find it interesting." The vampire then began his narration.

Madhavsén was a rich man of Madhopur. He had lots and lots of wealth. But he was generous in dispo-



sition. Anyone could go to him for help and he would not disappoint them. He had lost his mother and father when he was just a lad. He did not have any near relation either. So, he stayed all alone in his huge house.

His neighbour was Gopalbhai. He was very poor. Somehow or other he nurtured a hatred for rich people. He would not mind doing them harm, overtly or covertly. He often resorted to theft and robbery and earned epithets like cheat, cruel, and heartless from the people of Madhopur. They soon stopped calling him 'bhai' (brother) and referred to him as plain Gopal.

He would not dare do any bodily harm to Madhavsén. He, therefore,

tried to spread rumours and carry tales against him. He told people that Madhavsén was insincere, that his acts of charity were all for his own personal publicity and fame; that he was posing as a humble man but in his heart of hearts he was selfish. Moreover, he was not any idealist. Gopal claimed that as his neighbour, he knew everything about Madhavsén, even his secrets. People at first did not believe him, but the way he described Madhavsén, it all appeared very convincing.

One day, he became bold enough to call on the village chief. "Look at that, sir!" he said, very humbly and politely. "I've a large family; naturally I've several problems. If I had all along been like Madhavsén, I would have done for others much more than what he claims he's doing. It's a pity, I'm only a poor man. Do you know, sir, who's responsible for my poor state of affairs? Nobody other than Madhavsén himself. He's going to the help of anybody and everybody, but he doesn't care for his poor neighbour, me! If he were to part with some money for me, do you think he'll suffer any big loss? I'll earn a bad name, while he'll rise in people's esteem."

This was just by way of introduction. Gopal continued to remain with the headman, pouring oil into his ears—all about Madhavsén.

The village chief scratched

head. Should he believe all that he heard? There must be some truth in what Gopal said. "It's true, Gopal, he could have really helped you when he's helping all and sundry," remarked the headman, trying to console him. "But how can I go and tell him that he should help you as well? Would he heed my request?"

"He may not, sir," said Gopal. "He thinks too much of himself because he's rich. We may have to think of other means." He left it there vaguely.

Fortunately, Madhavsena came to know of Gopal's meeting with the village chief. He was sleepless for a day or two. He then called on him. After all, he must know what the people thought of him. He requested the village chief to convene a meeting of the villagers. Now, it was the turn of the village chief to be worried. Madhavsena was a respectable person and he could not but agree to his request.

He convened a meeting of the villagers at which Gopal, too, was present.

"So, you've a complaint that I'm not helping you, haven't you?" asked Madhavsena pointblank, turning to Gopal. "I'm going to wipe out that feeling from you in the presence of everybody here."

Madhavsena paused for a moment. "What's your monthly expenditure?"

"Two hundred rupees," replied Gopal.



"All right, how much do you earn every month?"

"Just about a hundred rupees."

"Naturally, you must have borrowed heavily. How much loan have you taken?"

"Nearly two thousand rupees."

Madhavsena now turned to the village chief. "I shall repay the entire loan. Moreover, I shall make arrangements for you to receive a thousand rupees every month, which you may pass on to him. But there's one condition. Let him take two hundred rupees for his monthly expenditure and distribute the rest of the money as charity. Let him show *his* generosity. Please ask him whether he's agreeable to this condition."





The village chief stood perplexed. He nodded at Gopal, who expressed his willingness to abide by the condition set by Madhavsena, who then continued: "He's my neighbour. But he's no friend. He insults me by spreading rumours about me. He tells everybody that I'm helping others for getting a name and fame for myself. I believe in keeping aloof from bad characters. That's why I've never gone to his help." He looked around to see how the people were reacting. They looked kindly at him.

Madhavsena once again turned to the village headman: "Sir, I've no desire for wealth. I've no inheritors. So, I'm bequeathing all my wealth for charity. I want you to be in charge of

my properties. I don't crave for a long life. I wish to proceed to the Himalayas to do *tapas*."

He then went about preparing the documents concerning his properties. He handed them to the village chief and prepared for his journey to the Himalayas.

On his way, he saw a rishi in a dense forest, sitting in deep meditation. He remained in his precincts. When the sage opened his eyes, he approached him and said, "O revered guru! Please accept me as your *sisya*."

The rishi looked at him from head to foot. He then asked him some questions, to which Madhavsena replied as best as he could. He found that Madhavsena was mature enough to learn things through yoga. "You can practise yoga in two ways—either by doing *tapas*, or by reading ancient treatises. I wish you took up the second method."

Madhavsena accepted the rishi's advice. He took Madhavsena as his *sisya* and began teaching him. Two years went by.

At that time Indragupta was the ruler of the land. The kingdom was suffering from acute drought. There had been no rain for two years, and people found it difficult to get any water even for drinking. The king did not know what to do. He discussed with his ministers, who too were unable to find a solution. They, in turn,

consulted the wise men in the land.

It was at that time Madhavsena visited that place. He saw the people running here and there to fetch a drop of drinking water. He called on the king. "I'll be able to solve the problem that your kingdom is facing. But I want you to do me a favour in return."

Indragupta then narrated how his kingdom came to suffer from water scarcity. Madhavsena listened to him and said with a smile, "It's a simple problem. It can be solved easily. I know a *mantra* by which one can control the atmospheric temperature. We have to perform a *homa* when I'll be chanting that mantra. And the best place for the *homa* is Sankaridurg, not far away from here. We shall proceed there and prepare for the *homa*. But one thing; only you should accompany me to Sankaridurg. No-

body else should go with us. We shall go in your chariot."

Indragupta did not object to the condition stipulated by Madhavsena. After all, his kingdom was going through troubled times. His subjects were suffering, and if he could save them from disaster, he would do anything; he would go to any extent.

The two started for Sankaridurg. The chariot went fast. Suddenly it halted. Madhavsena asked the charioteer why he had stopped the chariot. He pointed to the tigers which stood across blocking their way.

Madhavsena got down from the chariot and went straight to where the animals were standing. There were ten of them in all. The moment they saw Madhavsena, they went round him one by one and turned and ran back into the jungle. Indragupta could not





believe his eyes. The charioteer also had his eyes wide open on seeing the incredible sight. He took the chariot to Madhavsena, who got into it and asked the charioteer to proceed.

Soon they were approaching Sankaridurg. When they reached the boundary, they saw a crowd of people. The chariot stopped near them. An aged person stepped forward and stood before Madhavsena. "Oh! You're that yogi?" he accosted him.

Madhavsena merely nodded. "Our village chief had had a dream," the old man continued. "He dreamt that we would be visited by a yogi, he would perform a big homa, and the homa would bring in heavy rains, and that there would be rains everywhere

except our village. He also saw in the dream this village sinking after an earthquake, and that if we erected a tall statue lying beneath that banyan tree over there, the village could be saved from sinking. We went and tried to lift it, but it would not budge even a little."

Indragupta was listening to all this conversation from the chariot. He got down and told the old man, "Let me try to lift the statue. Come on, lead the way." They all went up to the banyan tree. The king took hold of one end of the statue and asked some of the youngsters to catch the other end. However much they tried, the statue would not move.

"O King! Don't think that everything can be achieved with physical prowess," said Madhavsena. "Some efforts will also need in addition to mantras. I know a mantra which can lift this statue." He then squatted on the ground and began chanting a mantra. Lo! and behold, the statue rose by itself and stood erect. The people were wonderstruck. They hailed Madhavsena as their saviour. Later they helped him prepare for the homa.

- When the homa started, the skies were a clear blue and there was no trace of even a single cloud. Halfway through the homa, however, clouds gathered from nowhere and soon the heavens came down in torrents. It rained everywhere, except in

Sankaridurg! There was relief from extreme heat; the rivers were in spate; and all tanks and ponds overflowed.

Indragupta was overjoyed. He prostrated before Madhavsena. "Swami! You're a great person; a yogi possessing great powers. You were able to lift that heavy statue with a mere mantra. You've been able to bring down the rains when there was not even a speck of cloud. You possess such mysterious powers. And you're asking me to do *you* a favour? Who am I but a very ordinary person compared to *you*! Can I be of *any* help to *you*?"

Madhavsena only smiled. "O King! You've come to the conclusion that I've some mysterious powers. Every person will have some problem which he'll not be able to solve himself. That's only natural. I belong to

Madhopur in this kingdom. I once possessed a lot of wealth and enjoyed great comforts. I used to share my wealth with those in need. However, I had a neighbour; instead of being friendly, he began carrying tales against me. I got disgusted. So, I gave up all my wealth and made arrangements for giving it away to charity. I then started for the Himalayas. On the way I met a rishi. I became his sishya and he taught me some mantras which gave me all these powers. And I'm making use of them to either alleviate the sufferings of people or to solve their problems. My neighbour is now jealous of me; he has been trying to rob me of the treatises I have. The favour I am asking of you is, protect me from my neighbour and safeguard the ancient manuscripts from which I propose to learn more mantras."



King Indragupta was surprised. "Swami! You've lifted a heavy stone statue by chanting a mantra; you've caused rains to fall by performing a homa. And *you* ask for protection from an ordinary man! Isn't that something self contradictory?"

"O king! You're the ruler of this land," argued Madhavsén, "whereas I'm only one of your subjects. Aren't you responsible for the safety and protection of your people?"

Indragupta thought for a while. He was convinced that Madhavsén was right. On returning to the capital, the king ordered his soldiers to keep a vigil around the *ashram* where Madhavsén lived and to warn Gopal not to go anywhere near the ashram.

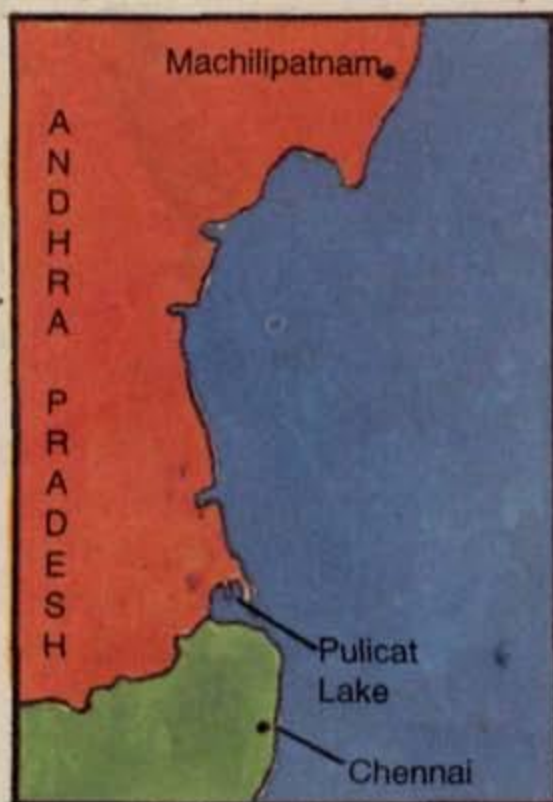
The vampire concluded his story there and turned to King Vikramaditya. "O King! No doubt Madhavsén had acquired mysterious powers and performed many wonders. Still, he had to seek the help of King Indragupta in containing his

neighbour Gopalbhai. Why? If you know the answer and yet prefer to remain silent, you know what'll happen! Your head will be blown into a thousand pieces"

"It was not as if Madhavsén was himself not capable of restricting Gopal," said Vikram. "He did possess enough powers to do that. But he was using all those powers for the welfare of the people. It is the duty of the rulers of the land to maintain law and order and establish peace. If Gopal had been allowed to have his way, then, it would have resulted in lawlessness. Madhavsén was only reminding Indragupta of a king's functions and duties. That was why he sought the help of Indragupta in the matter of his neighbour."

The vampire realised that Vikramaditya had been too smart for him. He flew back to the ancient tree, taking the corpse with him. And the king drew his sword and went after the vampire.





Coastal Journey 19

Further Up The Coromandel Coast

Text: Meera Nair ♦ Illustrations : Gopakumar

As we move north from Chennai, our journey takes us to one of South Asia's largest lagoons, the **Pulicat Lake**, a salt water lagoon formed out of the backwaters of the Bay of Bengal. It is located at the border of Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh in the town of Pulicat. There are islands in the lake which abound in shells from which lime is manufactured. Pulicat has a bird sanctuary that was established in 1976 to protect the resident birds as well as the flocks of flamingos and other



Pulicat Lake

migratory shore birds that visit here.

Pulicat town was one of the earliest settlements of the Dutch in India. A major portion of the lake lies in Andhra Pradesh, India's 5th largest state and the first state that was formed on a purely linguistic basis. Andhra Pradesh has a long coastline characterised by meandering mountains. Cyclonic storms occur frequently, ravaging the vil-



The typical houses along the coast

lages and towns along the coast and in the interior.

To the north of Pulicat Lake, in the **Nellore district** of Andhra Pradesh, lies the island of **Sriharikota** - the Indian Space Research Organisation's rocket-launching centre. India's first sounding rocket, Rohini, was launched from here on October 9, 1971. The island has seen the launching of 400 sounding rockets and 11 major satellites so far. A new launch pad is being constructed to accommodate larger launch vehicles.

Converting the island into a spaceport has dislodged the Yanadis, a primitive tribe, who live in the thick forests of Sriharikota. Yanadis are mainly hunters. Many of them still produce fire by striking stones together.

Andhra Pradesh is an important producer of mica, most of which is mined in Nellore. Nellore, however, is better known



A rocket being launched



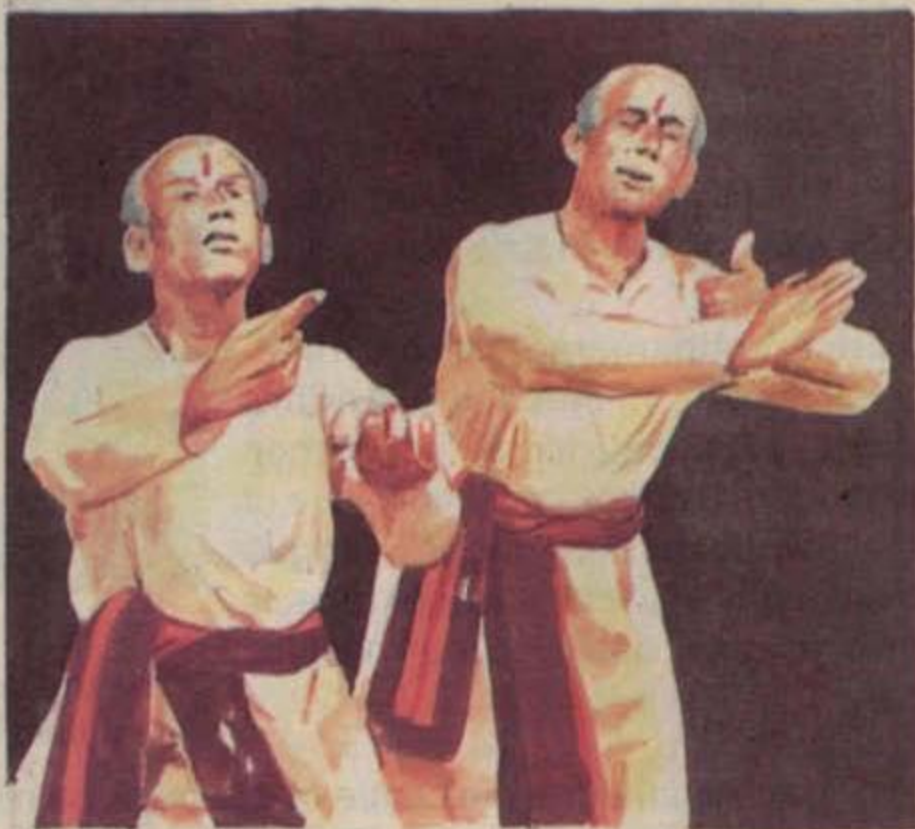
for its paddy fields and its association with **Tikkana**, a great poet who adorned the court of Manumasiddhi, a chief of Nellore and a vassal of the Kakatiya king, Ganapathi around the 12th century AD. Tikkana completed the translation of the Mahabharata begun by another of Andhra's great poets, Nannaya. Tikkana's translation earned him the title of *Kavi Brahma*. The small temple in which Tikkana composed this masterpiece serves as a cement godown today!

The Andhra coast has two great deltas formed by the perennial rivers, Godavari and Krishna. The delta areas are known as the '**granaries of the south**'.

One of the tributaries flows through the village of **Kuchipudi**, where the famous dance form, Kuchipudi, is said to have originated. In the latter half of the 17th century, a great ascetic, named Siddhendra Yogi, conceived the *Parijata Haranam* - a poem

that tells the story of how Sri Krishna's wife, Satyabhama, succeeded in persuading him to get the celestial *Parijata* tree planted in her garden. Siddhendra Yogi taught a group of boys in Kuchipudi to perform the *Parijata Haranam*.

The dance became extremely popular. When it was staged before Nawab Abdul Hasan Tana Shah, the last of the Golconda rulers and a great patron of fine arts, the nawab was so moved by the performance that he gave the village of Kuchipudi as a gift to Siddhendra



Famous exponents of Kuchipudi, Guru Vempati Chinna Satyam



Raja and Radha Reddy

Yogi and his dancing troupe, but on the condition that the village be used as a nursery to develop the newly created dance form. Siddhendra Yogi made his disciples promise that they as well as their sons would continue to stay at Kuchipudi and perpetuate this art and that every male member would play the role of Satyabhama at least once in his lifetime. Even today every boy in this village has a bell tied around his waist as a mark of initiation.

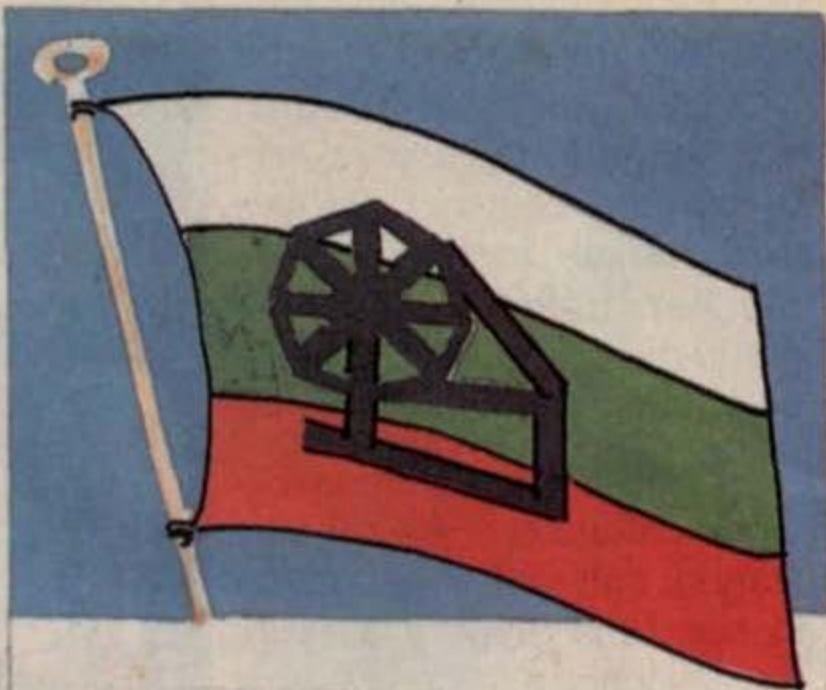
The dance form, however, has undergone a change over the years and is now no longer restricted to males.

At the mouth of the Krishna river lies **Masulipatnam** or **Machilipatnam** a well-known seaport in ancient times. It was a Dutch stronghold in the 1680s. The French captured Machilipatnam in 1750 and nine years later it fell into British hands. Machilipatnam was one of the first British administered areas of Andhra Pradesh. It lost its strategic importance after it was devastated by a cyclone on 1 November, 1864. It continues as a minor seaport and serves as the administrative area of

the Krishna district.

Machilipatnam played an important role during India's struggle for freedom.

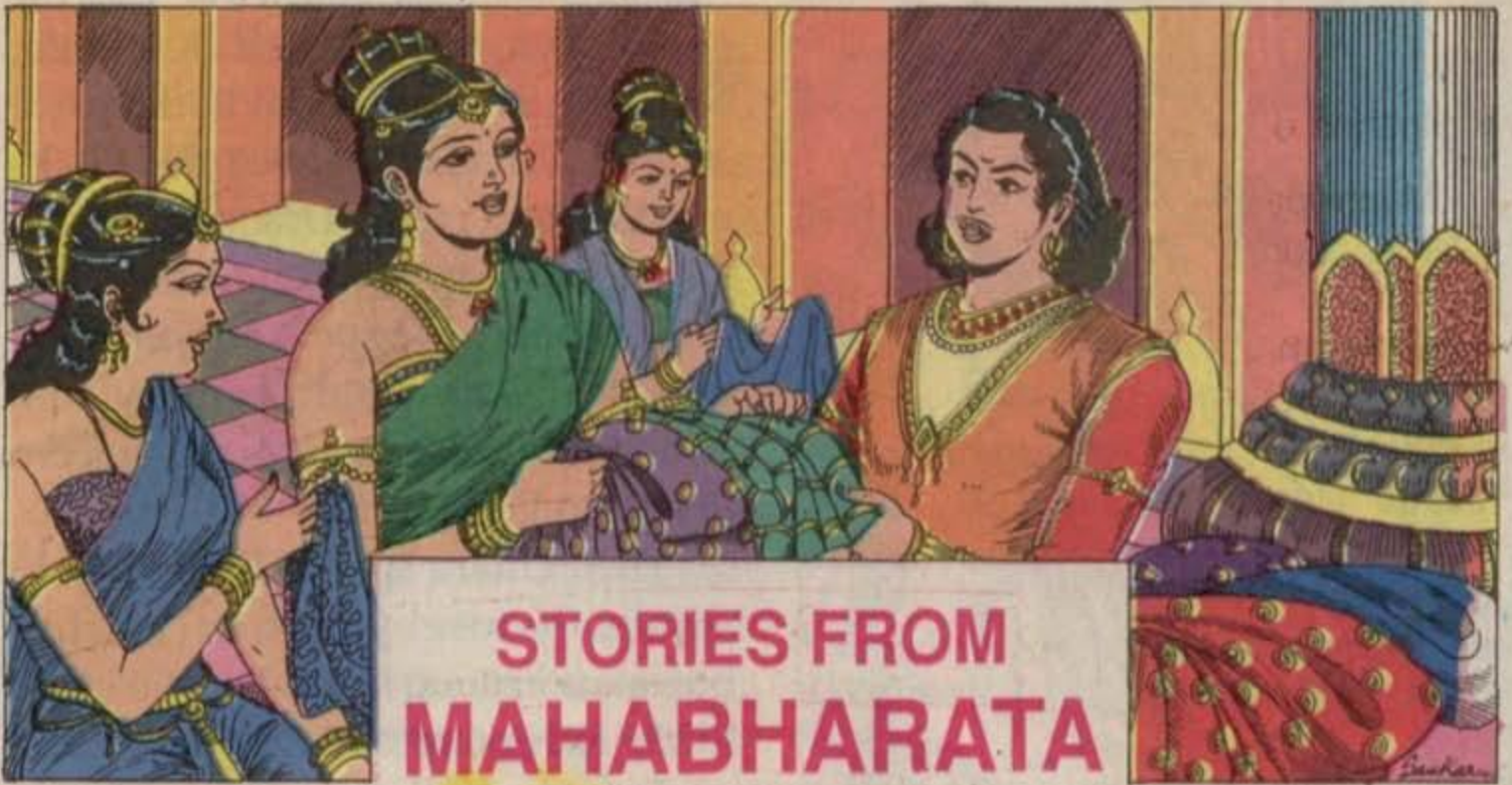
Gadicharla Harisarvotthamarao, a staunch freedom fighter, founded the **Andhra Jateeya Kalasala** to train young men in modern technology in the cause of the **Swadeshi Movement**. **Pingali Venkayya**, also of the same place, is said to have designed our national flag.



The tricolour national flag designed by Pingali Venkayya

Machilipatnam is the centre of *Kalamkari* painting on fabrics, an industry that is said to go back to 6th century B.C. The word *Kalamkari* means 'pen work'. Striking designs, depicting mythological themes were painted on the cloth with the help of penlike brushes. Nowadays wooden blocks are used instead of the traditional pens.





STORIES FROM MAHABHARATA

The story so far: The Pandava princes have been forced to spend twelve years in exile, and a further year in total secrecy. They spend the last year as employees in the house of Virata, King of the Matsyas. The Trigartas and the Kuru army led by Duryodhana attack the Matsya kingdom. King Virata with his main force fights the Trigartas in the south, and it is left to Prince Uttara to defend the kingdom against the Kurus, who attack from the north. Prince Uttara has no enthusiasm to fight, and it is Arjuna in disguise who comes to his rescue and soundly defeats Duryodhana and the mighty Kuru army.

King Virata, eager to know the identity of the god who had come to the aid of his son, asked, "Uttara, who was that god? Why didn't you bring him with you? I would have expressed my heartfelt gratitude to him!"

Uttara replied, "He disappeared soon after defeating the Kauravas. He may come here tomorrow."

The king did not know that Arjuna in the disguise of Brihannala was indeed that god.

Then Uttara presented the

colourful sashes of the Kauravas to the ladies of the palace who decorated their dolls with them and rejoiced in the victory of the prince.

Next day, the Pandavas decided to disclose their identities and went to the king's court dressed in their regal splendour. King Virata, on entering his court, was rather surprised to see them sitting on the high thrones meant only for monarchs.

Annoyed, he addressed Yudhishtira, "Oh Brahmin, do you desire to sit on a king's throne? Have you

30. PANDAVAS REVEAL THEMSELVES



forgotten your own status?"

Then Arjuna replied, "O King, this Brahmin is deserving of even Indra's throne. His honesty is well known. When he was a sovereign, many kings bowed low before him. Even Duryodhana trembles at the mere mention of his name. And you prattle so plainly because he dared to sit on a puny throne!"

Taken aback by these words, the king stammered, "Then, then, is he Yudhishtira, Kuntidevi's eldest son? Where are his brothers, Bhima, Arjuna, Nakula and Sahadeva? And what has happened to Draupadi?"

Arjuna replied smilingly, "Here you see them all. There is the mighty Bhima who went by the name of

Vallabha in your court. He was the gandharva who killed Kichaka. Nakula was your groom in the royal stables. Sahadeva tended the flocks of sheep and cattle. Draupadi served the queen as her maid under the name of Sairandhri. We spent our period of exile in your land, happily and comfortably. We express our sincere thanks to you for that."

Then Uttara spoke, "Father, here stands before you that mighty bowman Arjuna. It was he who came to my aid and routed the Kauravas."

Then the king, overcome with joy, said, "Truly, I am fortunate that the Pandavas chose my land for their exile. Though they lived like ordinary folks in my service, yet their valour alone has saved my land from disaster. Why, it was Bhima who saved me from Susarma. Arjuna saved my country from the Kauravas. And as for Yudhishtira, I am ashamed to recall the indignities heaped upon him. I seek pardon for all that I said and done to the Pandavas."

Then bowing before Yudhishtira humbly, he beseeched him to rule over Matsya. "Sir," he said, "everything that you see here is yours; my land and my possessions, all belong to you. Pray, accept my daughter Uttara as a bride for Arjuna."

Yudhishtira looked questioningly at Arjuna who, turning to the king, said, "Your Majesty, I can accept Uttara only as my daughter-in-law.

After all, I was her preceptor. I taught her the art of dancing. Besides, I'm like a father to her. Therefore, it is not proper that I marry her."

Acknowledging the gesture, the king said, "True, what you say is true. Your son, Abhimanyu, is the right match for her. I'm indeed lucky that our families will be united in marriage."

Yudhishtira announced an auspicious date for the wedding and an invitation was sent to Krishna at Dwaraka.

Now that their period of exile had ended, the Pandavas began to live at a place called Upablavya, where they were soon joined by their friends and several neighbouring kings. The rulers of Kasi, Saibya, Drupada, the Upapandavas, Sikhandi, and Dhrishtadyumna arrived there. King

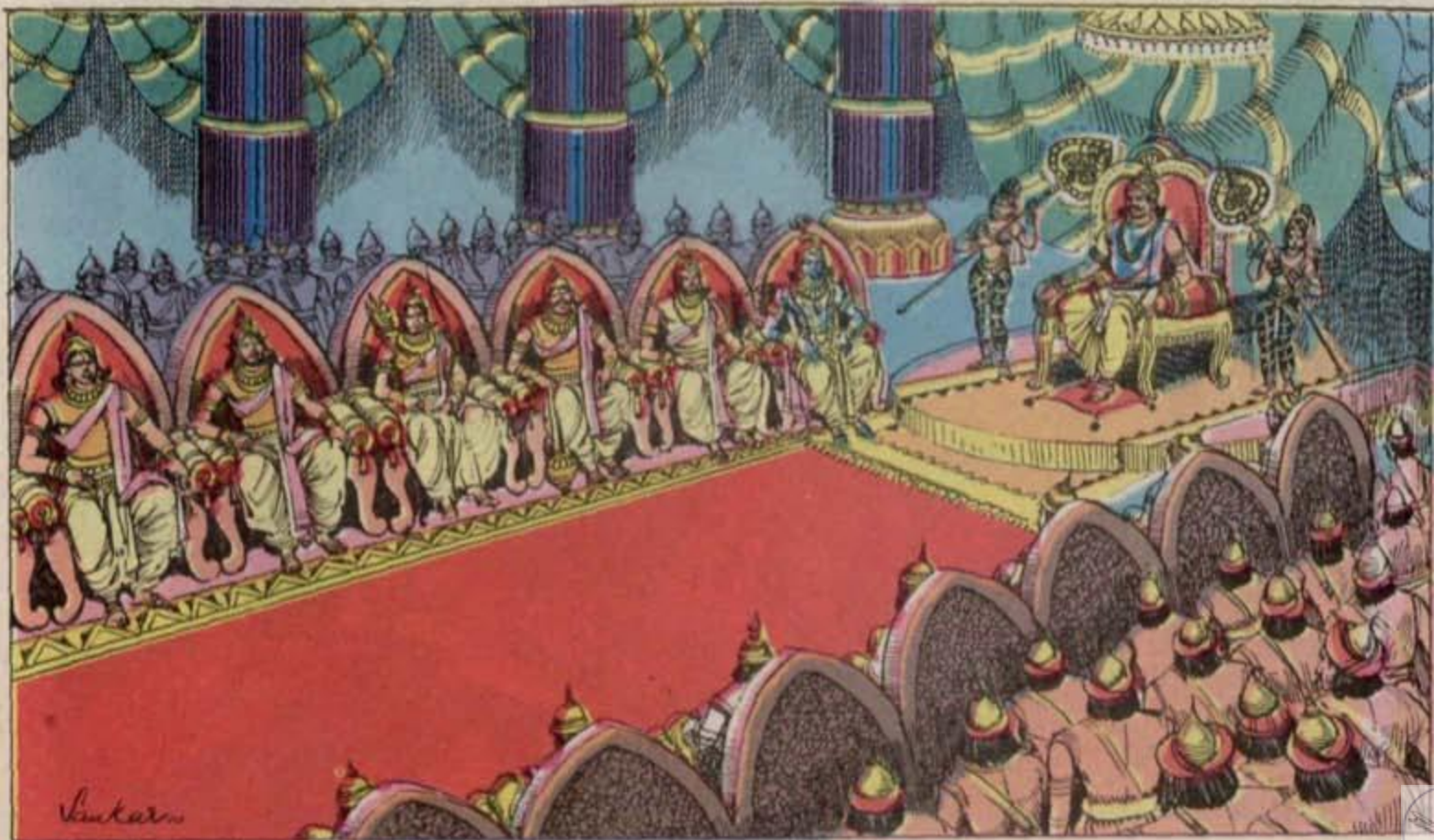
Virata welcomed them and accorded them all honour.

Lord Krishna arrived from Dwaraka, accompanied by Abhimanyu, Balarama, Kritavarma, Satyaki, Akrura, and Samba. The palace of King Virata now began to resound with the happy sounds of drums and pipes.

The visiting kings were treated to a magnificent royal pageant, accompanied by dance and music. Then the day of the wedding dawned. To the chanting of vedic hymns and joyous cries of the people, Abhimanyu married Uttara.

After the wedding, all who had gathered there began to discuss the future course of action.

Said Lord Krishna: "Yudhishtira lost his kingdom in the deceitful game inflicted on him by Sakuni. Everyone



knows how Duryodhana usurped the kingdom of the Pandavas. Though they had the power to oppose their enemies, they chose to abide by their promise to live in exile for twelve years. Now all that is over. We cannot praise them enough for undergoing stoically all the adversities of life. Whatever we decide now must be fair to both Yudhishtira and Duryodhana. Yudhishtira will not wish to receive anything unjustly. I am sure he'll be satisfied even with the tiniest village. But the Kauravas are always inimical towards them. They are jealous of the Pandavas. Well, we desire that the two groups of kinsmen should live in amity, even after the Pandavas receive their kingdom back. There must be peace; or else war will be the only unfortunate alternative. I don't have to tell you that if there is a war, the

Pandavas will destroy the Kauravas completely. Therefore, let's send a messenger to Duryodhana to find out what he proposes to do!"

Balarama agreed with most of what Lord Krishna said, but disputed only one point. "It was wrong of Yudhishtira to have gambled," he argued. "Everyone knew what a sly and treacherous fellow Sakuni is. Even then Yudhishtira accepted his offer, gambled and lost. Therefore, we must settle this matter amicably with Duryodhana. For that purpose, we must send a proper messenger who will be able to talk sense. I do not approve of war, on principle."

Satyaki could no longer contain himself. "I expected Balarama to speak in this vein," he shouted. "But I am surprised that the rest of you should keep silent about this. Was it



Yudhishtira who offered to gamble first? Duryodhana enticed him through a trick. A Kshatriya cannot refuse to take up such a challenge. If the dice had been rolled fairly, Yudhishtira would have won. But he lost unfairly and had to go to the forest. He kept his word and lived in exile. Duryodhana must hand over lands the Pandavas deserve. There can be no question about that. But obviously he's trying to evade the issue. Therefore, war is the only solution. Let us destroy the Kauravas and crown Yudhishtira King of Hastinapura. Why should we beg for what is rightfully ours? Anyway, let's listen to Yudhishtira."

But Drupada sprang to his feet and said, "I agree with Satyaki. Duryodhana is not the one to be softened by words and King Dhritarashtra can never make him obey his will. Further, he will be influenced by the words of Sakuni, Duhsasana and Karna. Even if our

messenger be good, that is not enough. He must be able to drive home the justness of our demand. Let's gather our friends and prepare for a battle. This man here is my high priest. He has experience in such matters. So let us send him to Dhritarashtra."

Lord Krishna approvingly said, "Drupada is right. This strategy will benefit the Pandavas. They can then live in harmony with their cousins. We had come here for the wedding which passed off happily. So let's go back to our homes. Meanwhile Drupada can instruct his high priest on what is to be conveyed to Dhritarashtra. Let the messenger go to Hastinapura where Drona and Bhishma should know how to honour him. Then let's know what answer Duryodhana gives to the just demands of the Pandavas."

All the kings then departed. King Virata heaped numerous gifts on Lord Krishna and saw him off to Dwaraka.

— To continue





Why is the Dead Sea so called ?

Sukanta Kumar Panda, Bhadrak

This large (1,020 square kilometres) lake is situated partly in Jordan and partly in Israel. The chief river joining it is the Jordan river. The lake lies 394 metres below the sea level, and the water is very salty and bitter, and no fish or other sea creatures live in it. Hence the name.

What is "Doppler Effect" ?

P.S. Sarat Chandra, Secunderabad

Johann Doppler (1803-1853) was an Austrian scientist. He discovered a change in the observed frequency (or wavelength) of waves due to relative motion between the wave source and the observer. Like the change one notices in the pitch of a siren as it approaches and then recedes. Or like the 'red shift' in light or lengthening of the wavelengths of light, from an object as a result of its motion away from us.

What is the full quotation : "Man is a social animal" by Aristotle.

A. Rashid, Calcutta

The actual sentence is "Man is by nature a political animal." This is from Aristotle's (384-322 B.C.) *Politics*, of which an edited version by W.L. Newman is available in most libraries.

OUR READERS WRITE

Helps develop language

I like 'Towards Better English' column very much. It helps develop my English language. 'Golden Hour Teasers' are very good.

K. Raghavendra Reddy, Kurnool

Edition in Panjabi

Your magazine has very interesting stories. I suggest that you please publish it in Panjabi also. In our Punjab, most of the people do not know any other language except Panjabi.

Gurdial Singh Sandhu, Fazilka

'Chandamama' had, some years ago, an edition in Panjabi. It was discontinued because of want of reader support. -Editor

Book form

I would like to see 'Towards Better English' in book form.

P.S. Sarat Chandra, Secunderabad



Golden Hour

1.17,000-year-old caves with more than 600 paintings on the walls?

The Hall of Bulls, a huge chamber within the caves, is especially noteworthy.



13 Where in the World Would You Find...

2.this nine-storeyed tower erected by the Rajput ruler Rana Kumbha in 1440 A.D.?

Known as a Vijay Stambh or 'Tower of Victory', it stands 36 m high.



3.a snow-capped mountain in Africa?

Though it is located in the sweltering climate of the equatorial region, its slopes are covered in ice.

4.the 'giraffe' women?

They belong to the Padaung tribe and have copper rings wound around their necks, from the time they are three years old. Considered a mark of beauty, the number of rings are increased as the girl grows older, to lengthen the neck.



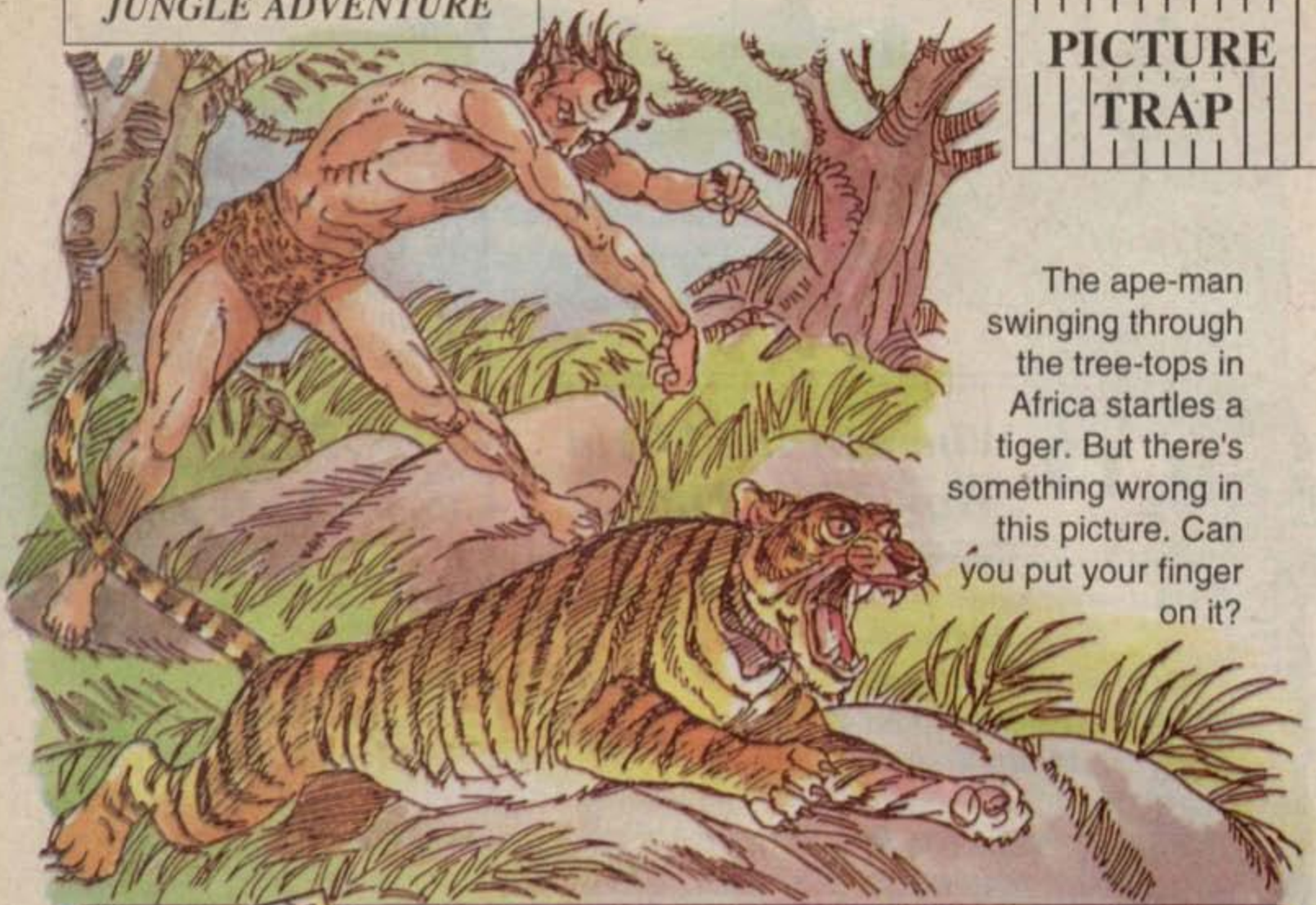
5.a library with 860 km of shelves holding more than 20 million books?

Housed in three buildings, the Library of Congress also has 4 million maps, 9 million photographs and 1.3 million musical and spoken recordings!



JUNGLE ADVENTURE

PICTURE TRAP



The ape-man swinging through the tree-tops in Africa startles a tiger. But there's something wrong in this picture. Can you put your finger on it?

PICTURE QUIZ

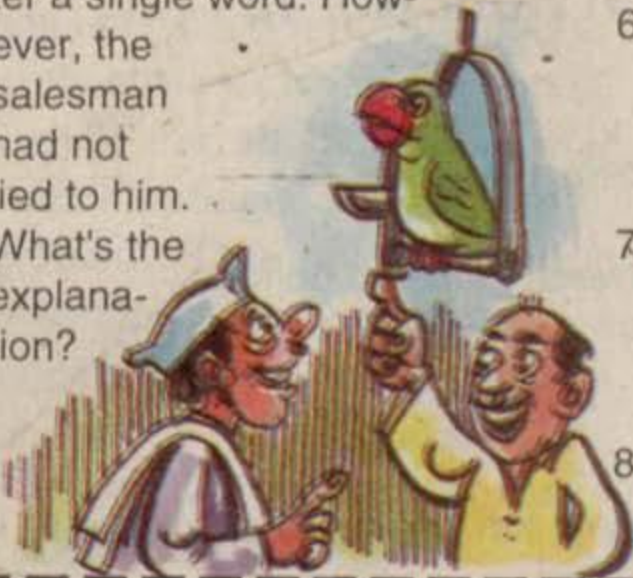
Here are the silhouettes of nine countries, all wrongly named. Can you give the right name to each silhouette?





MIND BENDERS

1. I have two coins totalling 55 paise. One of the coins is not a 50 paise coin. What are the two coins?
2. "This parrot will repeat every word it hears," said the pet shop salesman to the customer. The customer bought the parrot and tried to teach it to talk but the bird wouldn't utter a single word. However, the salesman had not lied to him. What's the explanation?



3. Mr and Mrs Rane have 3 daughters and each daughter has a brother. How many people are there in the family?
4. Which was the largest island before Greenland was discovered?
5. Would it be cheaper for you to take one friend to the movies twice or two friends at the same time?



6. There are 5 apples in a box. How do you divide these among 5 girls so that each girl gets an apple but one apple remains in the box?
7. At a party of Truth-tellers and Liars you meet a man who says he has just overheard a certain girl say she is a liar. Is the man a Liar or a Truth-teller?
8. Who gets the biggest boots in the army?

Activity

Things required:

Empty bottle, egg shells glue, paint.

Procedure:

- a) Wash egg shells with soap and water until thoroughly clean.
- b) Break them into small pieces.
- c) Glue each piece to the

bottle.

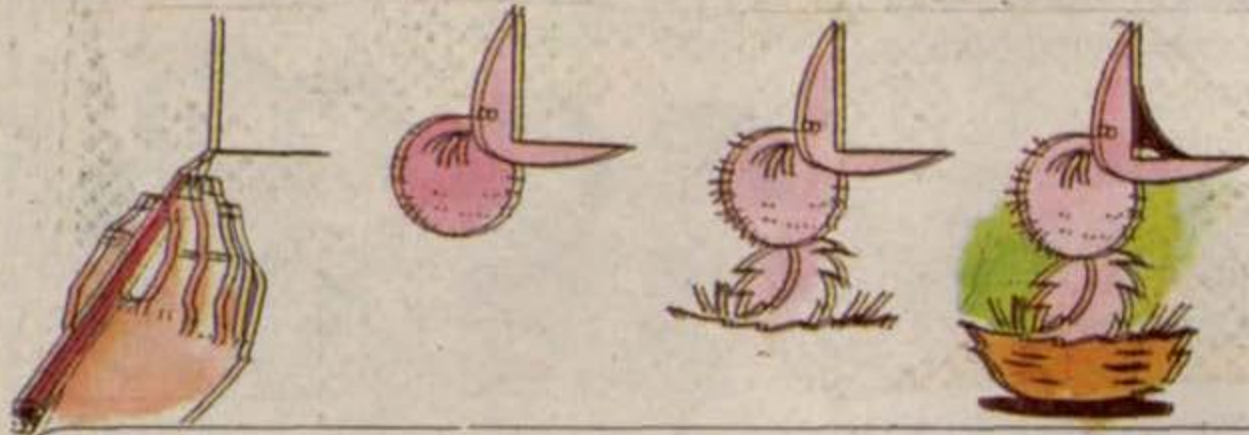
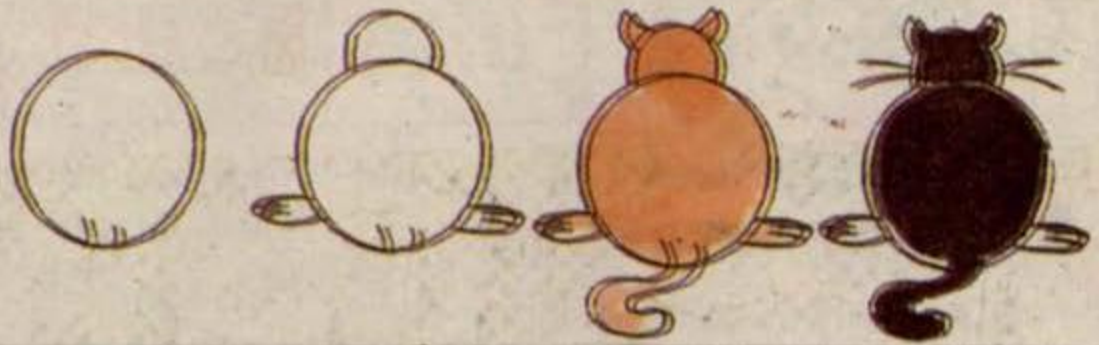
d) Paint each piece of shell with a bright colour and you have a beautiful flower vase.



Flower Vase

Let's draw it =====

A cat lying
in wait for
a mouse



A very
hungry
baby bird

Answers to Golden Hour No. 12

WHERE IN THE WORLD

1. Galapagos Islands, off Ecuador in South America.
2. Vatican City.
3. Lake Titicaca lies on the border between Peru and Bolivia.
4. Across Sydney Harbour in Australia.
5. Deshnok, Rajasthan.

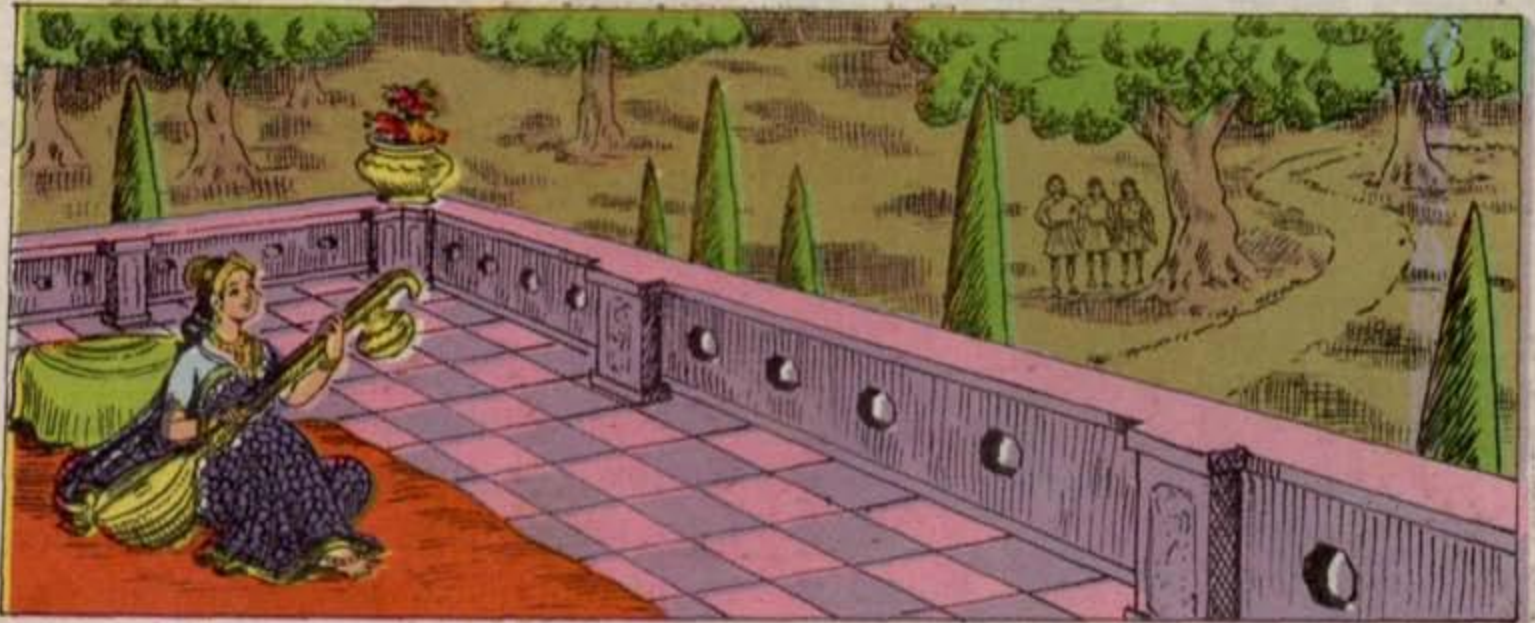
STORY TRAP

He says he undressed before getting into the water so how did he fill his pockets with biscuits?

MIND BENDERS

1. When it has a rider.
2. When the weighing scale is out of order.
3. Turn the page upside down!
4. Snakes have no eyelids and cannot close their eyes.
5. When there are two of them!
6. A clock!
7. A bottle!
8. The story is obviously not true. The soldier had only one arm so it was not possible for him to cut off his other arm with a sword.

A Fair Choice



Veer, Dheer, and Sudhir were the sons of Mahavir of Mahanagar. The brothers were clever, intelligent, and close to one another. There was much unity among them; no quarrel, no arguments. They revelled in each other's company and shared their jokes and thoughts. There was no secret between them, except in one instance. Each one of them wished to marry Princess Mandakini. Each one devised strategies to win her hand unknown to the other two.

They would go to the garden near the palace every evening, trying to attract her attention. She would at that time be on the terrace enjoying the cool breeze. The brothers would eagerly wait for that moment and go back stronger in their determination to possess her. They took care to pose

as if they were visiting the garden every day for different purposes. So much so, no brother could even guess that the other two was in the garden for the same purpose! Each one was dreaming of a more beautiful garden, where he would be walking in the company of Mandakini!

However, the princess never noticed the three brothers in the garden below. Even when she saw them, she did not care about their presence and would not lean against the parapet wall for longer than a second. She would spend most of her time in reading a book or playing on the veena.

One day, Mahavir called the boys and said, "My dear sons, I'm growing older and older. I've earned enough and saved enough for your comfort and pleasure. A part of our wealth has



been inherited from our forefathers. When you get married and begin to rear your own families, you will be spending all this wealth. So, what I want to advise you is, you must take up some business and try to earn for yourselves."

Mahavir was not only practical but farsighted, too. He wanted his sons not to spend what he had saved for them. For their living, they should very well earn. The sons realised the significance of their father's advice, and decided to set out and travel within the country. Their journey took them to Kanakapur where they spent a lot of time in going round the market. They were attracted by some of the artefacts on display. They were about

to buy them, but then checked themselves. "Let's not spend any money now. We'll do business and once we earn enough, then we'll buy whatever we like." They also decided to go in different directions and return to Kanakapur at the end of one year and meet in the same market-place.

One year went by. Veer was the first one to reach Kanakapur. While he waited for his brothers, he went round the market and saw a huge lemon. The trader claimed that its juice would cure any disease. Veer could not resist the temptation. He paid the price the trader asked for and bought the lemon.

The second brother to arrive was Dheer. Before he met Veer, he too went round the market and bought a unique carpet which, he was told, would fly the moment it was spread and one were to sit on it. The two met and soon Sudhir joined them. Before he met them, he had also done some shopping. He bought a mirror, by looking into which one could see the place and people one visualises in one's mind.

Thus it happened that each of them took a fancy for a particular antique and bought it to satiate his curiosity. Even before they actually saw what the other had bought, they were complimenting themselves for their thoughtful purchase and their usefulness.

It was Sudhir who opened his

packet and showed the mirror he had bought. He then thought of Princess Mandakini in the palace. "Ah! Ha! The princess...!" He could not complete the sentence because by then tears welled in his eyes and his throat choked.

"What did you see in the mirror?" his brothers asked him anxiously. "What has happened to the princess?"

"Princess Mandakini is unwell!" Sudhir mumbled. "You, too, can see in the mirror by touching my shoulder. She looks seriously ill. People have gathered around her."

The elder brothers, too, felt sad as they had been nourishing a secret love for the princess. All three jointly came to a decision. They would proceed to the palace immediately. Dheer said, "Let's sit on my carpet and it'll take us fast to the palace." They spread the carpet and sat on it. Soon they were at the gates of the palace.

There was already a crowd at the gate, all of them with sad faces. When they saw the three young men getting up from the carpet, they took them to be men with some mysterious powers and so made way for them to enter the palace.

They told the guards that they would be able to cure the princess of her illness. They were ushered into her chamber. Veer asked for a bowl of water and he cut open the lemon and squeezed its juice into the



bowl and asked the princess's maid to make her drink it. No sooner had she taken the last drop than Mandakini sat up in her bed, wiped her eyes, and looked at everybody around her. She smiled.

The King of Kanakapur was overjoyed. "I'm so happy that my daughter has regained her health. I'm ready to fulfil my promise of giving her in marriage to anyone who would cure her, and offering half of the kingdom as a gift."

He turned to the three young men. "You've come here and saved the princess. Her wedding will soon take place. Now decide among yourselves who would marry her."

The brothers were in a dilemma.



Till then they did not have any disagreement between themselves. Now, there was certain to be rivalry for the hand of the princess. Each one of them decided to stake his claim. The king listened to them carefully. "I don't think the dispute among you can be solved so easily. I shall summon the court in two days time and consult the wise men in the land. Let them advise me as to who is more eligible than the other two."

The court assembled and the king explained his predicament. There was silence, as the wise among the assembly racked their brain to find a solution. Some time passed. Then they saw Princess Mandakini standing up. "Nobody has asked for my views, but I wish to express my opinion if the court will permit me."

All the wise men felt relieved. "Yes, of course, we must listen to the Princess," said the seniormost among them.

"All three brothers have played an

equal role in my recovery," said the princess. "But let me ask this question: The one with the carpet will have that item with him; so also the brother with the mirror. It will remain with him, and he'll continue to make use of it. What about the one who brought the lemon? It has been used for curing me of my illness, and, therefore, he's a real loser. He's the one who sacrificed his possession for my sake. So, it's only fair that he is compensated. I wish to marry him!"

"How just!" one wise man said. "How fair!" said another. "She's wiser than us all!" said a third person.

The king was happy that his daughter herself had found a solution to the problem which he once had thought would remain unsolved. He proclaimed that the wedding of Princess Mandakini and Veer would take place the next day. The wedding was performed with great pomp and gaiety.



NEWS FLASH

Year of the Ox

The Chinese people name their years after wild or domestic animals, which have a place in their mythology. As it is practically impossible to pick up a hundred such animals for that many number of years, they have chosen twelve of them for a cycle of 12 years. And this year, it is the turn of the Ox. The Chinese 'Year of the Ox' was ushered in on February 8. Like every new year, this year, too, was marked by reunion in families, shopping sprees, all-round jubilation, and traffic jams! Of course, traditional feasts, too. In Hong Kong, which Britain will return to China in July, there was a parade of characters from popular Chinese operas. A huge balloon in the shape of an Ox was taken out in the parade.



First Sweden, now Switzerland

A Japanese hotel in Sweden made a chocolate which was 182 metres long. This was on February 17. Before it could get into the Guinness Book of Records, representatives of the publishers were in Switzerland two days later measuring the serpentine chocolate made by a confectionery there. It was 221 metres (725 ft) long and 3 cm wide. It was propped up on tables laid end to end and later cut into small bars and distributed free among 500 selected chocolate-lovers. You wish you were there, don't you?

All-women climbers

Of course, you have heard of Bachendri Pal, haven't you? She is the first Indian woman to climb Mount Everest, the highest peak in the world. The adventurous among Indian women have since been climbing mountains of lower heights and undertaking hazardous journeys. They have now formed a network of associations and have been keen on attempting something unique to commemorate the 50th year

of the country's Independence. They approached Bachendri Pal, who agreed to lead an all-women team on a trek of 4,000 km along the Himalayan mountain ranges. The trek includes some daredevil climbing, too, though they may not attempt scaling the tallest peak. The team was flagged off from Delhi a day after Republic Day and will return to the base in time to disclose the details of their adventures before Independence Day.

Donkeys with stripes

You have heard of 'Tigons', haven't you? They are a cross between the tiger and the lion. Now a cross-breeding of donkeys and zebras has been successfully attempted. A pair of these animals—what do you call them? Donbras? Zekeys?—in London's Leominster Zoo, are attracting many visitors. Here they are seen with their trainer, Susie Pollard.



Isn't it strange that the zebra stripes are perceptible only on the legs?

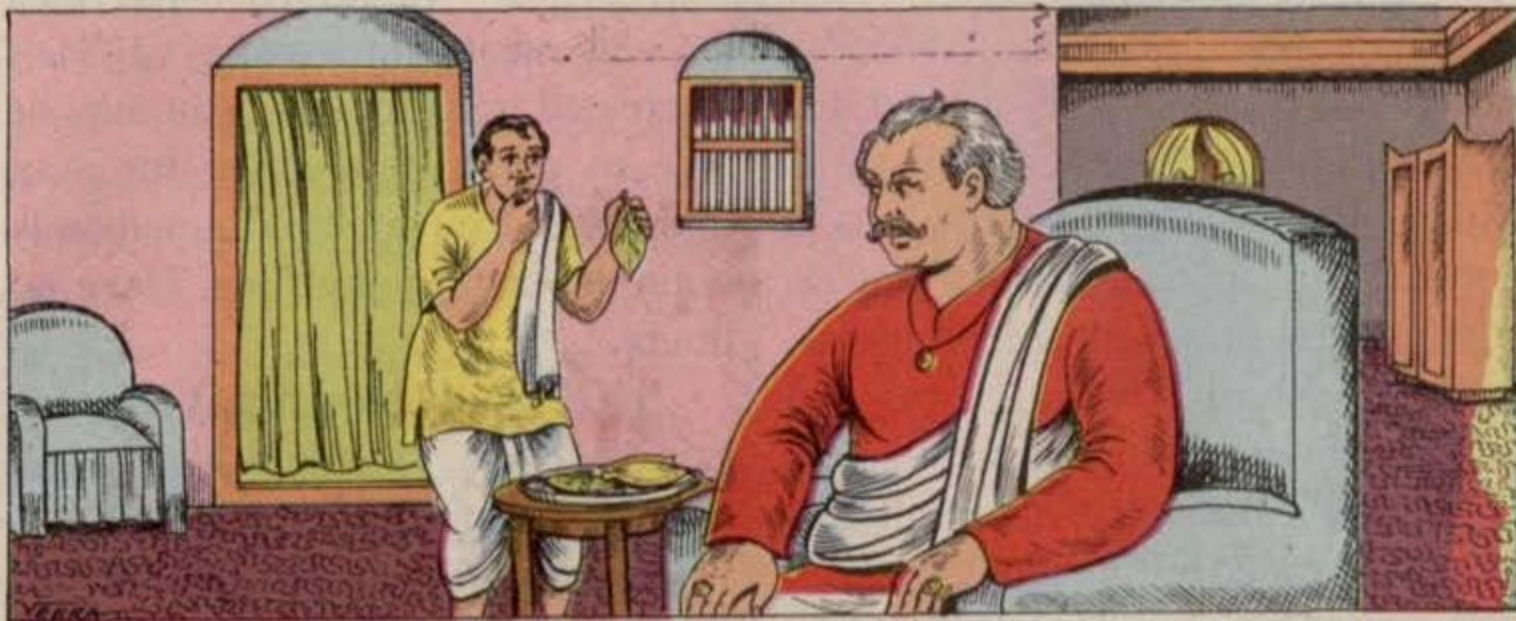
Brain drain in U.S.A.

Nearly 50 per cent of the Indian students who go abroad for studies choose the U.S.A. for various reasons. And we in India bemoan our brain drain! Doesn't it sound strange to know that in 1995-96, some 10,000 American students went abroad to pursue higher studies? And about 200 of them had come to India!

The sinking city

In 1991, Uttarkashi in U.P. suffered untold damage and havoc in human life following an earthquake. Subsequently, seismologists and geologists have been conducting studies about earth movements in the State. According to one of them, Prof. M.N. Quereshi, the city of Jhansi, in the Bundelkhand region, has been sinking at the rate of .31 millimetres every year. For that matter, scientists had targeted Jhansi for such a study for the last 90 odd years, because of the tremors the place has been experiencing every now and then. Their frequency has increased in the past two decades, necessitating a deeper study, leading to quite a few shocking revelations. What the former Adviser to the Government in the Department of Science and Technology announced about the sinking city is just one of them.

REAL HOSPITALITY



Nagayya was a rich merchant of Narasimhapur. He was of a hospitable nature. He liked to entertain all those who visited him and would insist on their eating a meal with him. And the meal would be nothing ordinary. It would be almost like a feast. He took pride in nourishing a feeling that nobody else in Narasimhapur was as hospitable as he. He went a step further in wishing that there should not be anyone like him even in the neighbouring places.

All those who had an opportunity to enjoy his hospitality would praise him sky-high. Their words of compliments and flattery gladdened his heart and he took special care to see that nobody made an exception.

One day, he had a guest, Kasinath. He accepted his invitation and stayed

for lunch. They remained talking after they had eaten, when Kasinath remarked: "The food was excellent, I must admit, Nagayya. And in hospitality you're next to nobody except, of course, Sivaiah of Sivapuri! He's a shade better, if you don't mind my saying that."

Nagayya was crestfallen on hearing this remark. "Who's this Sivaiah?" he asked of Kasinath. "What's so unique about his hospitality? And how better is the food he gives? Does he serve more dishes?"

"Oh! You haven't heard of Sivaiah?" Kasinath expressed surprise. "He's wellknown for his hospitality! And the food he gives is just out of the world!" He remained quiet for some time and then said laughingly, "It's difficult to describe, one

must really experience it."

Nagayya decided then and there that he would go to Sivapuri the next day itself and find out for himself whether there was any truth in what Kasinath had told him. When he reached Sivapuri, he searched for Sivaiah's house. The gentleman was sitting on the verandah. It was a modest little house. Sivaiah got up and greeted him with folded hands. He then enquired who he was and where he was coming from. Nagayya replied in a friendly way, but deliberately avoided telling him the actual purpose of his visit. He told him that he was a diamond merchant and he had come there on business. If he had disclosed that he was aware of Sivaiah's hospitality, then he might extend an invitation to him to stay back and partake of his food. And he

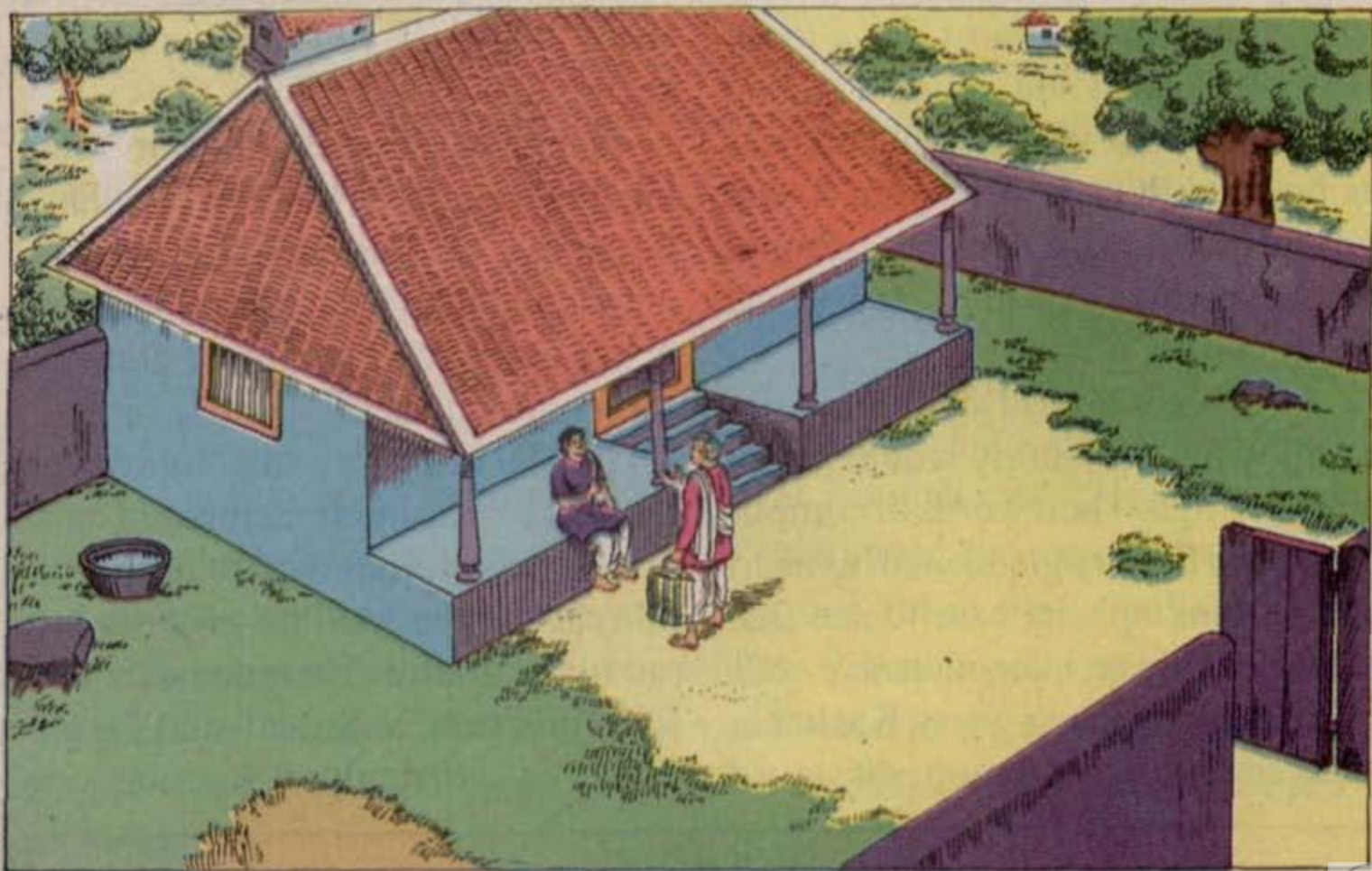
might even go out of his way in organising a feast. But that would only defeat his purpose.

"So, you're a diamond merchant?" said Sivaiah. "Good! Then you must go and meet Koteeswarayya. He's interested in diamonds. You may be able to get a good price for your diamonds. You must go immediately without wasting any time. Have no doubt."

"I'll certainly meet him, but later," said Nagayya. "I would like to rest here, if you don't have any objection."

"Certainly not, sir," responded Sivaiah. "But... you appear to be a wealthy person and I'm afraid I won't come up to your expectations. You may find me wanting in hospitality," he added modestly.

"If you really don't like me to stay here, I shall go away," volunteered



Nagayya. "I shall straight away go to Koteeswarayya's place."

Sivaiah did not wait for a moment longer. He caught hold of Nagayya's hands and led him into his house. He gave him water to wash his feet and drew a couple of chairs for them to sit down and chat. A little latter, Sivaiah's wife came and said food was ready. The guest and the host sat down to eat. The food was no feast by any means.

Soon after they got up, Nagayya said, "I feel so happy and contented. Let me now go to Koteeswarayya. Probably I'll accept his hospitality and be his guest."

"No, that's unfair," protested Sivaiah. "No, we won't let you go now. You must give us your company till tomorrow."

Nagayya was in a dilemma. The food was, to him, very ordinary. There was no special dish or curry, to honour a guest. He wondered what speciality Kasinath had seen in the food he ate at Sivaiah's house.

By then Sivaiah's wife and children stood around them, enquiring about Narasimhapur and the various sights there, and the musicians there, about whom Sivaiah's wife had heard a lot. Nagayya satisfied them with his replies. During their conversation, which had turned lively, he happened to mention that he, too, knew music. They all then requested him to sing and he gladly obliged them. Back



home, nobody had ever asked him to sing nor had praised his music. He realised that hospitablity does not end with sharing and partaking of food. The host should endear himself to his guests through his behaviour and conversation.

It was Nagayya's first visit to Sivapuri. So, he too enquired about the place and its people. "You must go round the place, sir," said Sivaiah, "there's an ancient Devi temple, and an old fort, too. I shall send my children with you to show round the place. Only, you'll have go on foot."

"I won't be able to walk all that distance," said Nagayya. "I'd better remain here and enjoy the company of your family." He then enquired



about the children.

Sivaiah told him that they were adept at carving figures; his wife sang fairly well, and her brother was a promising poet. By then, the children went and brought some of the figurines they had modelled out of clay, and showed them to him. Their uncle produced some of the poems he had composed, while Sivaiah's wife agreed to sing some songs.

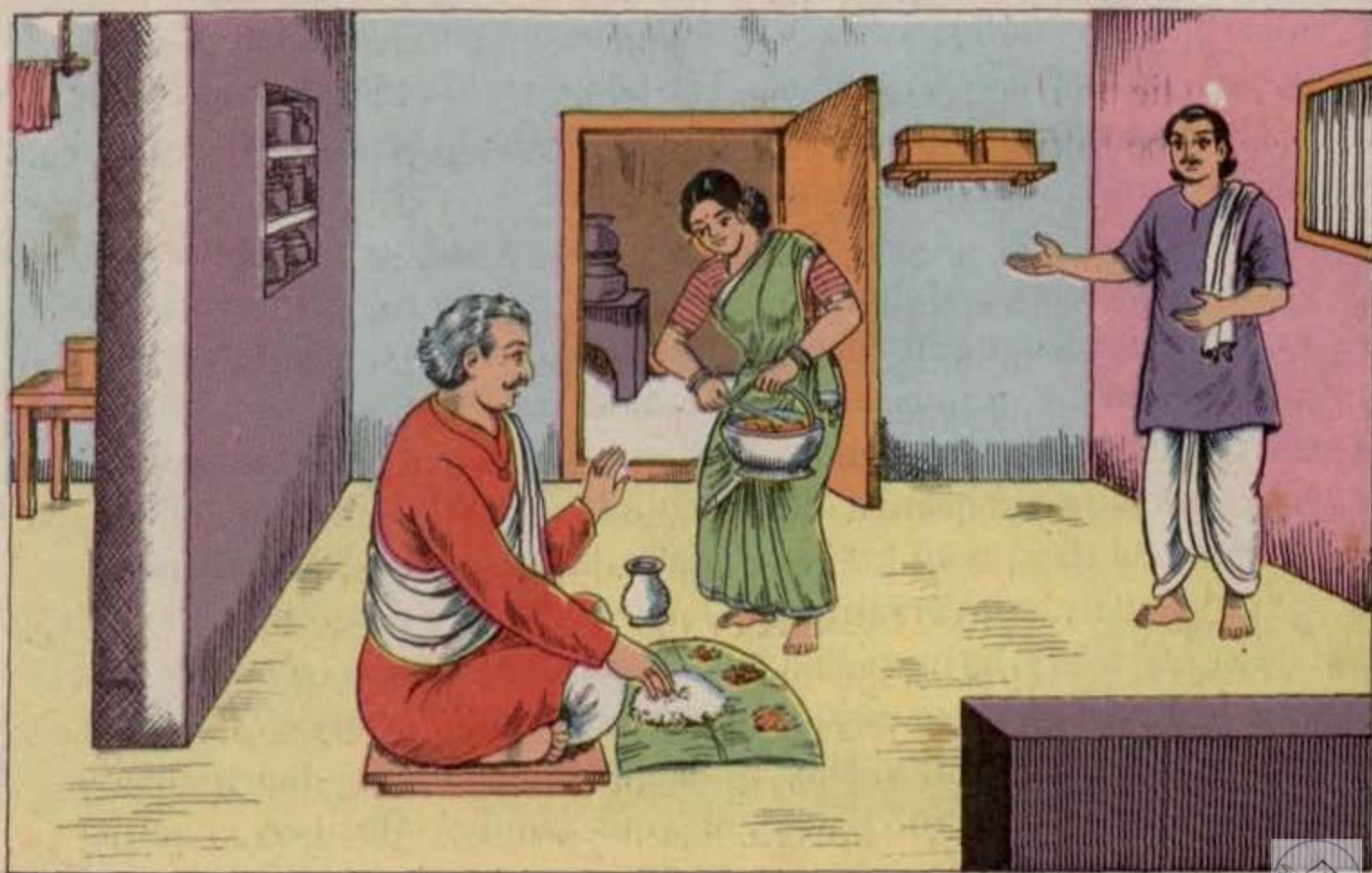
"You must be feeling tired, sir," said Sivaiah. "When you're tired, you won't be able to enjoy music. We can postpone that programme till tomorrow. In fact, we would like you to stay here for some days."

"No, I'm not at all tired," replied Nagayya. "And if you'll insist, I shall stay for a couple of days. I've grown a liking for your family." This he said with all sincerity. He now realised

that it is not proper to talk only about oneself to one's guests. Nobody would like self-praise by the host. Again, it is improper to send away guests soon after they have eaten food. They should be prompted to stay on for a longer time. That is real hospitality.

Sivaiah's wife found out what dishes Nagayya liked most. And she prepared all those dishes. He found her good at cooking. After taking food, the family suggested that he should rest for a while. Later he and Sivaiah went for a walk around the place. Once, he suddenly halted and said, "Sir, is there anything particular that I can do for you? Any wish that has not been fulfilled?"

Nagayya was surprised. He was a rich man, whereas Sivaiah was of modest means. Yet he was offering him help to fulfil a desire that has



remained unfulfilled in life so far! "Sivaiah, one should not promise anything that one cannot really undertake. Suppose I mentioned something and you're not abale to fulfil it, you'll feel sorry and I, too, will feel bad."

"I quite understand what you're hinting at," said Sivaiah. "I made that offer only because I'm confident that I'll be able to fulfil it. I was not boasting."

Nagayya tried to explain his stand, but Sivaiah continued to say that whatever he wished, he would see that Nagayya got it, too. "If that be the case, I would like to go to Devaloka and see the nymphs dancing!" Well, that would be something impossible for Sivaiah to fulfil!

"Come on, let's go home," said Sivaiah, nonchalantly. On reaching there, he pointed at a cot and asked Nagayya to lie on it and sleep. "Your wish would be fulfilled."

Nagayya lay down and for some time sleep eluded him, as he recalled all that had happened in the evening. Was he right in demanding something which he was sure Sivaiah would not be able to fulfil? he wondered. He did not know when he slept. But he slept well and had a dream, too. He had already reached Devaloka and wherever he turned, he saw beautiful nymphs dancing. He enjoyed himself thoroughly. Soon it was dawn and he woke up. He



informed Sivaiah what he had seen in his dream.

"It was not a dream, my friend," said Sivaiah. "It was real. One day, a yogi had come here. He was keen to share his magic powers with someone. Till then he could not find a suitable person deserving of such mystical powers. As usual, I extended all courtesies to him and he was quite happy. He probably thought that I was deserving of his blessings and favour and that I would not misuse them. He then taught me how to invoke those powers and told me that even impossible things would materialise if I used the powers discreetly and judiciously. It was that power that took you to Devaloka just as you had



wished. I don't misuse it. And I don't make use of it for my own desire, or needs, or to acquire any glory. In fact, I don't desire anything great for myself, not even a life of luxury. I've learnt how to control my desires. My only desire, for that matter, is I should be able to entertain my guests."

"Sivaiah, I consider you as my *guru* from this very moment," said Nagayya. "You're a great person, really. You possess so much powers, yet you don't use them for your own welfare and prosperity. You extend your hospitality to anyone who comes to you and for as long as they want or wish to. You even go to the extent of fulfilling all their desires. I had deliberately chosen a desire knowing fully well that it was next to impossible for you to fulfil. Yet you succeeded in meeting my desire. I'm learning new things in hospitality. I was all along under the impression that there was none to excel me in offering hospitality. I now know I was wrong."

Nagayya then prostrated before Sivaiah.

"What's this, Nagayya?" asked Sivaiah, who was really surprised over his guest's gesture. "You're making me a small man by showering praises on me!" He smiled so as to put Nagayya to ease.

"Sivaiah," said Nagayya, "I also play host sometimes, but I had all along felt that there was nobody to surpass me in hospitality in Narasimhapur or its neighbourhood, like Sivapuri. I now realise how much I was wrong in my assumption. One must have worldly knowledge to become wise. I now know how one should entertain one's guests. You're a lesson to me from henceforth!"

Nagayya took leave of Sivaiah and family and went back to Narasimhapur. He gave up his habit of praising himself and boasting to his guests. He first ascertained their wishes and acted accordingly to give them happiness and satisfaction.



SPORTS SNIPPETS

Kipketer clips seconds

And the seconds mattered, because that meant two world records in three



daystime. Kenya-born athlete Wilson Kipketer now runs under the flag of Denmark. He was running the 800 metres at the World Indoor Championship in

Paris on March 9. He clocked 1 minute 42.67 seconds, which is a world record. On March 7, in the first heats he timed 1 min. 43.96 seconds, which beat by nearly a second the existing world record standing in the name of Paul Ereng, also of Kenya. By winning the event, Kipteker was richer by 1 million dollars—half of it for the world record, and the other half for annexing the world indoor title.

Most medals

Can you answer this quiz? Who has won the maximum number of medals for India at international meets? And are you surprised if



the answer is Kunju Rani of Manipur? This achievement—for which there is no parallel in the history of sports in India—has been made in the field of weightlifting. Described as the 'tiny dynamite', this 29-year-old gazetted officer with the Central Reserve Police participates in competitions in the 46kg category, in which currently she is ranked No. 3 by the International Weightlifting Federation. Since her first participation in the world championships in 1989, she has pocketed 17 silver and 1 bronze; from the Asian Championships, she won 2 gold, 11 silver, and 5 bronze; and in Asian Games, her tally is 1 silver and 5 bronze. Championship titles in three National Games are additional feathers to her cap. She is now aiming for a gold at the Sydney Olympic Games in 2000, which will have women's weightlifting as an event for the first ever time.

Another Indian woman weightlifter, who too aspires for an Olympic gold, is Karnam Malleswari of Viskhapatnam. She was twice world champion in the 54 kg category—first in 1994 and then in 1995. She, too, has the third ranking in the world in that category. In the National Weightlifting Championships



held in Chennai (Madras) recently, she almost came to make a new world mark. She lifted

95kg, which was 2.5 kg more than the 92.5kg she had lifted at Trichur (Kerala) last year. She made a second attempt to go beyond the 98.5kg world mark in the name of China's Zou Peie made in 1994. Malleswari was not successful. Her tally so far is 12 gold, 5 silver, and 10 bronze in 11 international competitions. In world championships, it is 8 gold and 4 bronze medals. Two sisters—one older, another younger—of this Deputy Manager with the Food Corporation of India were also well-known lifters.

Best Tennis star

This recognition has gone to Steffi Graf this year for the fourth successive



year and for a total eight times, which is a record. Martina Navratilova was voted to that position only seven times. Steffi missed this recognition only twice in the past ten years—that too to Navratilova. The recognition comes after a voting by the world media which found her a winner in 54 out of 58 competitions in 1996. However, Steffi stands to lose Number One ranking to Martina Hingis when the placings are announced by the International Tennis body in April.

Synonymous with cricket

Mention Cricket in Trinidad, and



everybody will immediately utter the name Brian Lara. He has become such a legend and a celebrity there. There are reasons,

too, for this cricketer earned fame in international cricket by setting the highest individual score in Test Cricket—500 runs in just one innings. Recently for another reason, too. He has moved into his new house, which is estimated to cost 1,20,00,000 rupees. Even for Trinidad standards, this is considered too high a price. In no time will this spot in Crescent Hill in Savanna, Port of Spain, become another "mecca" for cricketers the world over.

A home for flame

The 'home' will be the National Stadium in Delhi for the flame for the Asian Games to be held in future. Delhi was chosen because it was in India's capital that the first Asiad was held in 1951. Just as the Olympic Games torch is always lit at Mount Olympia in Greece, the Asiad torch will henceforth be lit from the permanent flame to be kept in Delhi and taken to whichever will be the host city. It is proposed to lit the permanent flame during the 16th general assembly of the Olympic Council of Asia meeting in Delhi from December 6 to 8 this year. The afternoon of December 7 will witness this solemn ceremony.

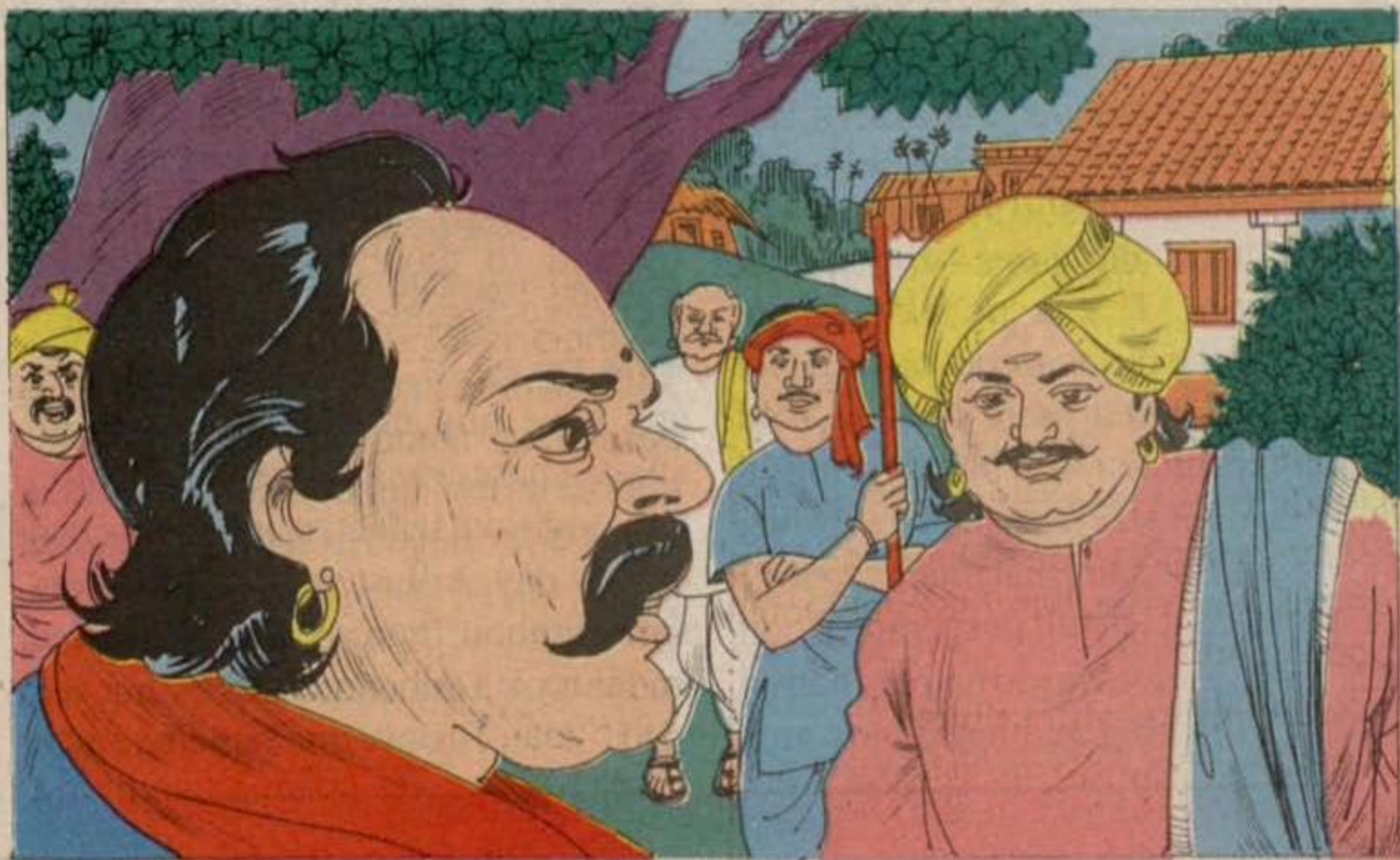
THE ANIMAL IN MEN

Ramnath started for Kasi on foot. On the way, he met Keshav and Karunakar. Both were handicapped. He took pity on them. He gave them food and some money, too. He then proceeded to Kasi, where he performed whatever rites he wished to and worshipped at different temples.

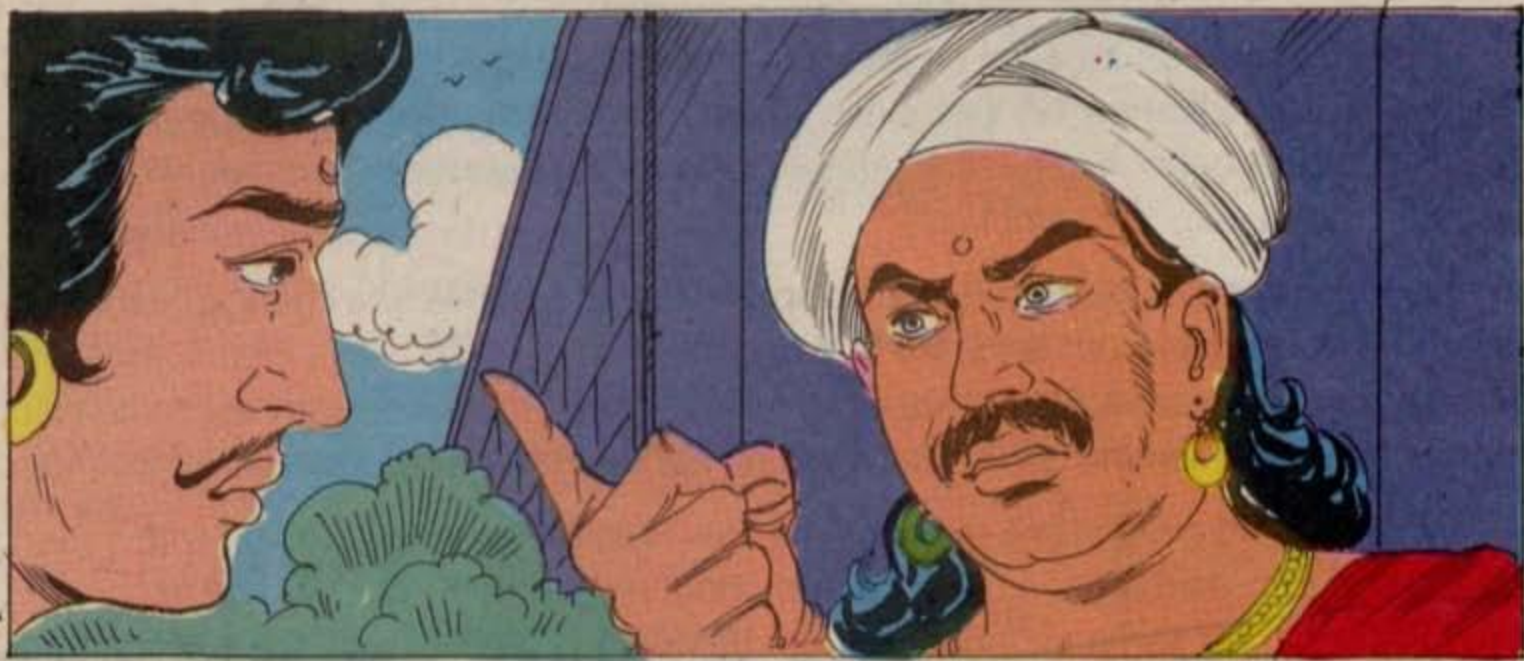
During the return journey, he came upon Keshav again. A sea change had come about him in such a short time. He had become a *sanyasi* and had also collected a large group of disciples. He did not even raise his head to look at Ramnath, who also did not attempt to remind him of their meeting earlier. Ramnath continued his journey.

When he had gone some distance, he saw Karunakar, who stood up with folded hands and enquired after his welfare and about his visit to Kasi. He even accompanied Ramnath for some distance, though he could walk only with some difficulty.

On his return home, several people crowded around him asking about his journey and his stay in Kasi. Ramnath recounted his experiences. He also mentioned about Keshav and Karunakar. Among his listeners was the village headman who remarked: "One can see animal behaviour in some human beings. If you give food to a dog once, it will remain loyal to you forever. If you give milk to a cat, it will jump into your lap and lick itself clean, forgetting all about you and the milk you gave it. Keshav is like the cat. Do you want any other proof of some people behaving like animals?"



A DEVIL CAN BE HUMANE



Vijaysen was the ruler of Vijayapuri. He did not have any interest in administration. This was taken advantage of by his officials who thrived on bribes. People suffered from their maladministration, but they were unable to do anything. They went about meekly offering whatever was asked for to get their things done.

A young man, Pushparaj, got himself educated with great difficulty. He also learnt the use of weapons. He was keen to get a job in the administration set-up but to secure a job, he had first to meet the king. And to get an audience with the king, a huge amount was demanded as bribe. How could he spare that much money? he wondered. He felt desperate. Soon that feeling gave way to hatred—hatred towards the king and hatred towards

his officials. Pushparaj thought that a life in the jungle was far better than one in the town. He caught hold of a bow and a quiver of arrows and went away to the forest where he hunted animals and ate the fruits and leaves that were aplenty there. Years passed by without laying aside his bow and arrows except when he slept. He made himself comfortable on tree tops.

One day, Vijaysen fell ill. He seemed to have contracted some incurable disease. Several physicians were called in. They examined him and gave him medicines, but to no avail. There was no improvement in his condition. In fact, it only worsened day by day. At last, a physician from the neighbouring kingdom was called in. He took a good look at the king and said, "There's only one remedy, and it



is the paste made from of the leaves of the creeper called Amritavalli. But, then, it is very difficult to obtain the leaves, because the creeper grows only in forests. Who'll go and get it?"

The king's son Vamasen turned to the physician. "Please tell me how the leaves will look like, and where exactly the creeper grows. I shall myself go and get it. After all, it's the question of saving the king's life, and one has to take all risks involved."

The physician, Kamalanand, was comparatively young and was, therefore, drawn towards the prince. He admired the sense of determination he showed and the confidence he exuded. He gave him the details of the creeper and said it grew only in the forests below the Parbatgiri mountain ranges. Those forests were notorious for their inaccessibility and so nobody would venture to go there even for hunting. However, Vamasen started for the Parbatgiri forests. He could not go much deep inside, as he was afraid of wild animals that roamed the place and also of the poisonous snakes that the forests abounded in.

However, he did not go back to the palace. He had heard of Pushparaj leaving home and living in the forests. So, he asked the tribals living at one edge of the forests to search for Pushparaj and bring him to him. They failed to locate him. The prince then sent his soldiers to trace him. They managed to find him and told him that



he was being sought by the prince. Pushparaj was still nurturing a hatred for the king with whom he could not get an audience. Still, he decided to go and meet Prince Vamasen, though he knew the young prince could at times be very cruel.

"Pushparaj, you must have heard about my father's illness," said the prince, posing as a friend. "The physician wants the leaves of that rare creeper Amritavalli. That grows only in the Parbatgiri ranges. I'm sure you're familiar with the place. I want your help in locating the creeper and plucking some leaves. I shall give you enough money for your trouble."

"Don't talk of money now, prince," said Pushparaj. "My first mission will



be to help another human being. Let that mission be over; we shall talk about money later. Come on, let's start."

Both of them mounted horses. Pushparaj led the way, while Prince Vamasen followed him close behind. Pushparaj very cleverly cleared the pathway before advancing, so the prince had no cause for fear, though he did see several animals running away and snakes slithering away on hearing the shouts and sounds made by Pushparaj.

Two days and two nights passed. They were still far away from the eastern side of the forests where the physician had said the creeper grew. Pushparaj suggested that they left the horses and proceeded on foot because the plant was rather short and could not be spotted from a height.

As they progressed, they came near a cave inhabited by a Rakshasa called Raktapriya. His ancestors once ruled over the forests, and had a claim on the animals in the forests and would not allow any hunting by outsiders. Raktapriya, however, did not care for the animals. So, he allowed hunters inside the forests, only to kill them—instead of the animals they hunted—and drink their blood. So much so, no hunter ever went back alive, and people surmised that they would have been killed and eaten by the wild animals.

Raktapriya happened to see the

prince and Pushparaj roaming the place and searching for something. He gave out a wide smile. Today he would have a feast of human flesh and blood. He let out a wild cry and ran towards the two men. The prince's legs gave way when he saw the Rakshasa. "What shall we do, Pushparaj?" he whispered to his companion. "He's sure to kill us!" The next moment the prince fainted, but Pushparaj held him tight.

"O prince!" he said with disdain. "Your cruelty and your father's misrule are well known. Also the officials' greed. The people are suffering and they're all dissatisfied with your father's rule. I've heard about this Rakshasa. We've no alternative except to defend ourselves with the weapons we carry. Take out your sword!" On hearing this, Vamasen managed to straighten himself and stand erect. Pushparaj strung his bow.

Raktapriya slowly approached them. He caught hold of one of them by one hand and the other by the other, and said in glee: "Ha! Ha! What a great day! But how can I swallow two persons on the same day?"

Pushparaj made good use of the breather. "O King of Rakshasas!" he addressed Raktapriya. "I find that you've certain principles and you won't swallow two men at a time. Good. Now if you were to know what had brought us here, you might even change your mind. You've heard of



Vijaysen—the king of this land? He is suffering from a serious illness and he can be cured only by the leaves of Amritavalli that grows here. We've come here to pick some leaves. Here, he's Prince Vamasen, the king's son. Let us pluck the leaves and you may please allow him to go. I shall remain here and you may swallow me, so that you won't have to break your habit of swallowing more than one human being."

Raktapriya set them on the ground. "Amritavalli grows on the other side of my cave. I shall myself get them for you. But I've a doubt. The leaves are for saving the life of the king. So, isn't it proper that the prince sacrificed his life for the sake of his father? Is it fair on his part to leave you here and save his own life? After all, you're only one of the king's subjects."

"O Rakshasa! You've opened my eyes!" said Prince Vamasen. "You've become my guru. My father the king had neglected his rule. People have

been suffering because of the misrule in the land. And people also complain that I'm cruel. So, there's no point in my saving my own life. I shall not allow any harm to come to this subject of this kingdom. I had sought his help to come here and I shall not sacrifice him. Let him go back to the palace with the leaves. You may please swallow me whenever you wish to."

The Rakshasa laughed loudly and heartily. "I shall not swallow either of you!" he said, smiling. "You haven't come here to hunt animals. I love animals and I hate those who come to kill them. It's such people whom I make my victims. You both may go back safe."

He then helped the two to pick the leaves of Amritavalli and even escorted them till they mounted their horses and turned towards the city.

After the king was cured of his disease, he began taking an interest in the administration.

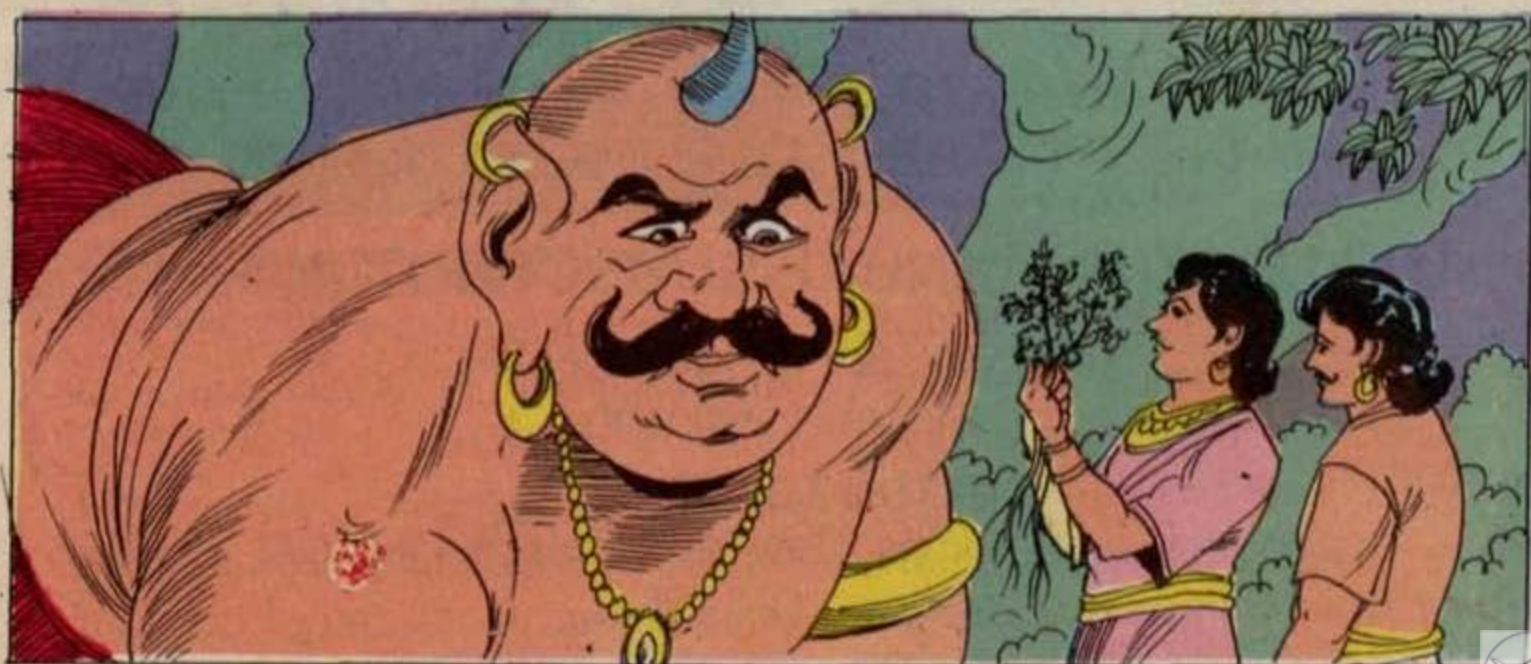


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